

Pace, I. (2017). Michael Finnissy - The Piano Music (10 and 11) - Brochure from Conference 'Bright Futures, Dark Pasts'. .



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BRIGHT FUTURES,

DARK

PASTS

*Michael Finnissy at
70*

Conference at City,
University of London
January 19th-20th 2017

Bright Futures, Dark Pasts

Michael Finnissy at 70

After over twenty-five years sustained engagement with the music of Michael Finnissy, it is my great pleasure finally to be able to convene a conference on his work. This event should help to stimulate active dialogue between composers, performers and musicologists with an interest in Finnissy's work, all from distinct perspectives.

It is almost twenty years since the publication of *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). Since then there have been a smattering of articles, numerous interviews, and my own monograph on *The History of Photography in Sound*. But in light of the breadth and diversity of Finnissy's output, there is a real need for a greater plurality of the best scholarly writing on this work and all the issues it raises – whether relating to musical reference, modernist aesthetics, sexuality, folk music, amateur music-making, indeterminacy, the visual arts, dance, photography, cinema, or much else. This conference forms part of a new initiative to stimulate more such work, and will be followed by a planned edited volume of essays on Finnissy's work.

I am also delighted that Patrícia Sucena de Almeida took up the challenge of creating a photographic work inspired by Finnissy's work, *continuum simulacrum*, which will be exhibited at this conference.

I wish to express my profound thanks to Leo Chadburn, Performance Officer at City, for his unrelenting help in making the practicalities of this event happen. To Louise Gordon and the Events department at City for much other organisational help. To Tullis Rennie and the City University Experimental Ensemble for taking on the project of playing two of Finnissy's works. And then of course to Miguel Mera and the rest of the Department of Music at City for their continuous support for this project.

Finally, naturally my greatest of thanks to Michael Finnissy, for so many things over so many years, but also for his important participation in this event, and immense support, provision of scores, and many helpful comments on the works and their performance, through the course of my mammoth series of his complete piano works of which this event forms the conclusion.

Ian Pace

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SCHEDULE

Thursday January 19th, 2017

09:00-09:30 Foyer, Performance Space.

Registration and TEA/COFFEE.

09:30-10:00 Performance Space.

Introduction and tribute to Michael Finnissy by Ian Pace and Miguel Mera (Head of Department of Music, City, University of London).

10:00-12:00 Room AG09. Chair: Aaron Einbond.

Larry Goves (Royal Northern College of Music), 'Michael Finnissy & Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: the composer as anthropologist'.

Maarten Beirens (Amsterdam University), 'Questioning the foreign and the familiar: Interpreting Michael Finnissy's use of traditional and non-Western sources'

Lauren Redhead (Canterbury Christ Church University), 'The Medium is Now the Material: The "Folklore" of Chris Newman and Michael Finnissy'.

Followed by a roundtable discussion between the three speakers, chaired by Aaron Einbond.

12:00-13:00 Foyer, Performance Space.

LUNCH.

13:10-14:15 Performance Space

Concert 1: **Michael Finnissy: The Piano Music (10)**. Michael Finnissy, Ian Pace and Ben Smith play Finnissy's works for two pianos or four hands.

Michael Finnissy, *Wild Flowers* (1974) (IP/MF)

Michael Finnissy, *Fem ukarakteristisek marsjer med tre tilføyde trioer* (2008-9) (BS/IP)

Michael Finnissy, *Derde symfonische etude* (2013) (BS/IP)

Michael Finnissy, *Deux jeunes se promènent à travers le ciel 1920* (2008) (IP/BS)

Michael Finnissy, *his voice/was then/here waiting* (1996) (IP/MF)

Michael Finnissy, *Eighteenth-Century Novels: Fanny Hill* (2006) (IP/MF)

14:30-15:30 Room AG09. Chair: Lauren Redhead (Canterbury Christ Church University).

Keynote: Roddy Hawkins (University of Manchester): 'Articulating, Dwelling, Travelling: Michael Finnissy and Marginality'.

15:30-16:00 Foyer, Performance Space.
TEA/COFFEE.

16:00-17:00 Room AG09. Chair: Roddy Hawkins (University of Manchester).

Keynote: Ian Pace (City, University of London): 'Michael Finnissy between Jean-Luc Godard and Dennis Potter: appropriation of techniques from cinema and TV'

17:00-18:00 Room AG09. Chair: Christopher Fox (Brunel University).

Roundtable on performing the music of Michael Finnissy. Participants: Neil Heyde (cellist), Ian Pace (pianist), Jonathan Powell (pianist), Christopher Redgate (oboist), Roger Redgate (conductor, violinist), Nancy Ruffer (flautist).

19:00 Performance Space.

Concert 2: City University Experimental Ensemble (CUEE), directed Tullis Rennie. Christopher Redgate, oboe/oboe d'amore; Nancy Ruffer, flutes; Bernice Chitiul, voice; Alexander Benham, piano; Michael Finnissy, piano; Ian Pace, piano; Ben Smith; piano.

Michael Finnissy, *Yso* (2007) (CUEE)

Michael Finnissy, *Stille Thränen* (2009) (Ian Pace, Ben Smith)

Michael Finnissy, *Runnin' Wild* (1978) (Christopher Redgate)

Michael Finnissy, *Anninnia* (1981-82) (Bernice Chitiul, Ian Pace)

Michael Finnissy, *Ulpirra* (1982-83) (Nancy Ruffer)

Michael Finnissy, *Pavasiya* (1979) (Christopher Redgate)

INTERVAL

‘Mini-Cabaret’: Michael Finnissy, piano

Chris Newman, *AS YOU LIKE IT* (1981)

Michael Finnissy, *Kleine Fjeldmelodie* (2016-17) première

Andrew Toovey, *Where are we in the world?* (2014)

Laurence Crane, *20th CENTURY MUSIC* (1999)

Matthew Lee Knowles, *6th Piece for Laurence Crane* (2006)

Morgan Hayes, *Flaking Yellow Stucco* (1995-6)

Tom Wilson, *UNTIL YOU KNOW* (2017) première

Howard Skempton, *after-image 3* (1990)

Michael Finnissy, *Zortziko* (2009) (Ian Pace, Ben Smith)

Michael Finnissy, *Duet* (1971-2013) (Ben Smith, Ian Pace)

Michael Finnissy, ‘They’re writing songs of love, but not for me’, from *Gershwin Arrangements* (1975-88) (Alexander Benham)

Michael Finnissy, *APRÈS-MIDI DADA* (2006) (CUEE)

21:30 Location to be confirmed

CONFERENCE DINNER



Friday January 20th, 2017

10:00-11:00 Room AG21.

Christopher Fox in conversation with Michael Finnissy on *The History of Photography in Sound*.

11:30-12:30 Room AG21. Chair tbc.

Keynote: Gregory Woods (Nottingham Trent University): 'My "personal themes"?!': Finnissy's Seventeen Homosexual Poets and the Material World'.

14:00-21:00 Performance Space.

Concert 3: **Michael Finnissy: The Piano Music (11): The History of Photography in Sound (1995-2002).**

14:00 Chapters 1, 2: *Le démon de l'analogie; Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité.*

15:00 INTERVAL

15:15 Chapters 3, 4: *North American Spirituals; My parents' generation thought War meant something*

16:15 INTERVAL

16:35 Chapters 5, 6, 7: *Alkan-Paganini; Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets; Eadweard Muybridge-Edvard Munch*

17:50 INTERVAL (wine served)

18:10 Chapter 8: *Kapitalistische Realisme (mit Sizilianische Männerakte und Bachsche Nachdichtungen)*

19:20 INTERVAL (wine served)

19:35 Chapters 9, 10, 11: *Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur; Unsere Afrikareise; Etched Bright with Sunlight.*

This performance is accompanied by a special new art-work, *continuum simulacrum* (2016-17) in the form of a 'book-box' and a stream of images, by Patrícia Sucena de Almeida. The images will be streamed on the large screen by the bottom of the stairs leading to the foyer of the Performance Space.



PROGRAMME: Concert 1

This concert, together with that taking place this evening, brings together all of Finnissy's works for two pianos or piano duet (such a grouping was last performed by the composer and myself at the Clothworker's Hall, Leeds University on October 23rd, 2010, when the output for this instrumentation was smaller).

Wild Flowers (1974) is quite typical of Finnissy's grandiose but tableau-based works of the early 1970s. It takes its cue from the poem *Auguries of Innocence* by William Blake:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour

The work was originally conceived for solo piano, but then re-conceived for two parts, and first performed with Finnissy playing alongside a recording of himself playing the other part, for a group called The Cedars of Lebanon at the London School for Contemporary Dance. The premiere of the concert version took place at the ISCM Festival in Paris on October 26th, 1975, played by the Labeque Sisters; it then remained relatively dormant until taken up by various younger pianists in the 1990s.

The piece is comprised of a series of interconnected episodes of varying durations: (i) a series of mysterious and opulent quiet gestures; (ii) a passage of extreme stasis comprising very quiet chords, mostly containing clusters, shattered by the first pianists' violent response to the second; (iii) an antiphonal passage in which the second pianist echoes the attacks of the first; (iv) a long rapid line working its way up from the bottom of the second piano, then taken over by the first, accompanying a further series of fragmentary gestures which become more sparse and dessicated; (v) a terse exchange of violent gestures between the two players; (vi) a more grandiose passage of large chords which dissolves into a series of lines in multiple periodic metres; (vii) a further exchange of violent gestures; (viii) a mini-climax which develops the lines from (vi), now in bombastic chords in both parts; (ix) a more continuous dramatic passage with further exchanges between the players, ultimately dissolving in an indistinct flurry of grace notes; (x) a return to the gestural world of the opening, but now more fragmented; (xi) a series of low but blinding tremolos in both pianos, changing at different rates within a huge *crescendo*, the effect of which was described by my wife Lindsay after the Leeds performance as being as if 'the pianos are about to take off'.

Fem ukarakteristisek marsjer med tre tilføyde trioer (2008-9) translates from the Norwegian as *Five uncharacteristic marches with three additional trios*. These were written for pianist Mark Knoop and premiered by him and the composer at the Borealis Festiva in Bergen on March 26th, 2009. The marches combine freely adapted fragments of Norwegian folk music (probably from Finnissy's usual sources, for which see the discussion of *Eadweard Muybridge – Edvard Munch* below) as well as material from Schubert's sets of *Marches caractéristiques* D. 886, *Marches héroïques* D. 602, *Marches grandes* D. 819, and *Marches militaires* D. 773. The three trio sections (the second, fifth and seventh pieces) are freer and more reflective, intended by the composer as a parody of nineteenth-century melodrama.

The *Derde symfonische etude* (2013), which was commissioned by the TRANSIT Festival in Leuven, Belgium and first performed by Ian Pace and Frederik Croene there on October 27th, 2013, follows two other pieces (for solo piano) derived from Schumann's *Etudes symphoniques* Op. 13; the title also refers to the series of pieces by Ivan Wyschnegradsky, each entitled *Fragment symphonique*. While the earlier pieces made reference specifically to the Schumann work, this study draws freely upon a wider range of reference to works which can be seen to relate to Schumannesque idioms: specifically two pieces from Carl Czerny's *Schule des Virtuosen* Op. 365, the 48th and 14th studies, the latter of which Finnissy says seems 'to search for Schumannesque lyricism and intensity'; and the second movement of Paul Dukas's Symphony in C major. The second part of the piece is a closer transcription of the *Adagio espressivo* from Schumann's Symphony No. 2 op. 61 (1845-7), which as Finnissy points out, itself constitutes a reflection on Schubert's 'Great' Symphony No. 9 in C major, of which Schumann played an important role in organising the first performance.

Adagio espressivo. ♩ = 78.

Flauti.

Oboi.

Clarineti in B.

Fagotti.

Corni in Es.

Trombe in B.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

Violoncello.

Basso.

Adagio espressivo.

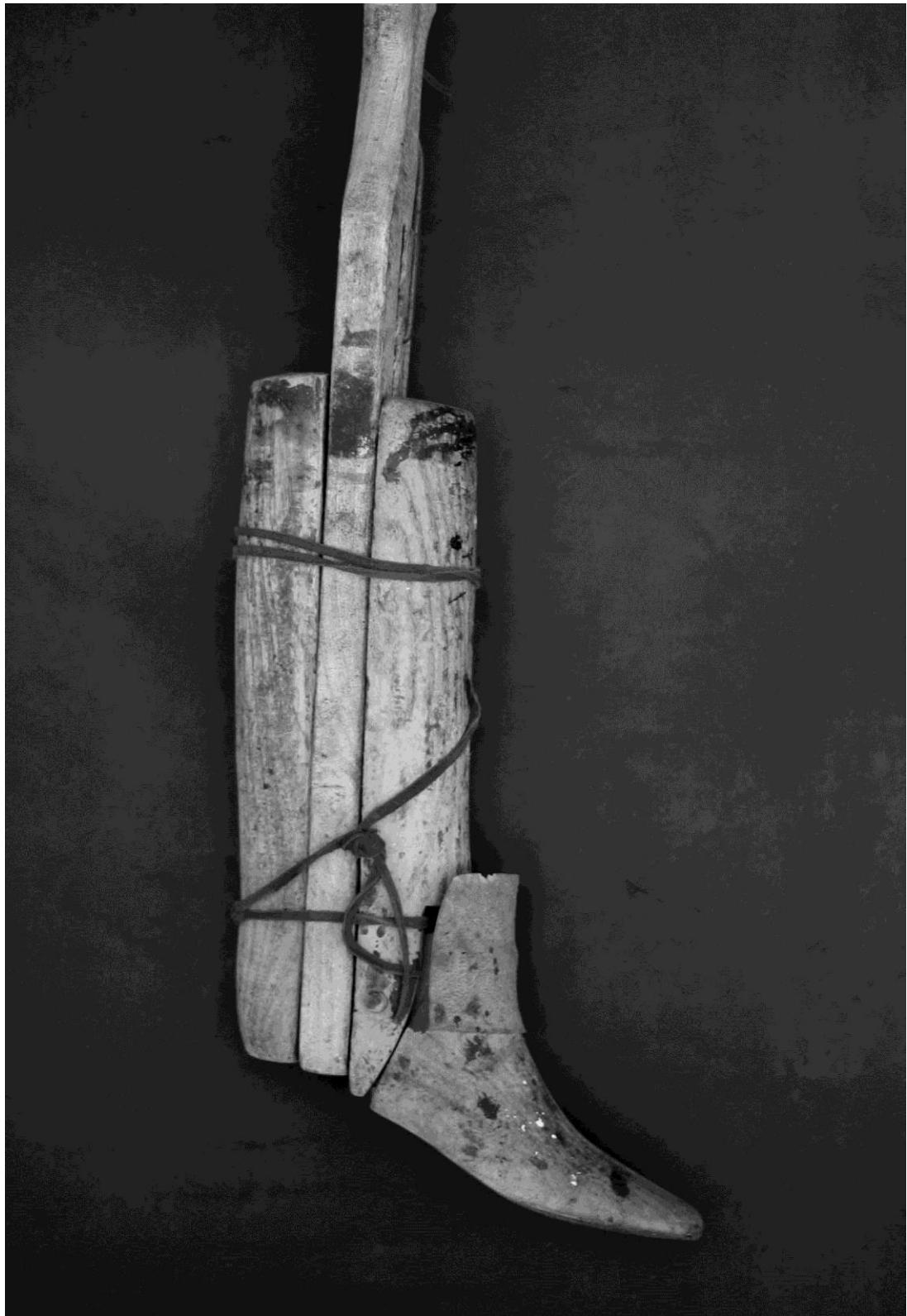
Robert Schumann, Symphony No. 2, op. 61, *Adagio espressivo*.

The title of *Deux jeunes se promènent à travers le ciel 1920* (2008) is derived from a collage by Max Ernst, a spectacular modification of a Victorian engraving, in which two well-dressed young women are seen to be riding a large bicycle, with wheels almost as large as them, raised from the ground, through a sky with torrential rain and scratches to appear like lightning. It was commissioned by the ABRSM for the anthology SPECTRUM (2012), and is dedicated to Thalia Myers, who compiled all of the SPECTRUM sets of new piano compositions to be played by students at various graded levels. The top part is derived from snippets from Emmanuel Chabrier's *Air de ballet* (written in the 1870s, but not published until 1897, after the composer's death) but modified in line with the tonally ambiguous neo-classical music of the 1920s, thus enacting a comparable process as that by Ernst to his original source. The lower part is made up of a simple three-note ostinato in the manner of Stravinsky, with gradual small modifications.

his voice/was then/here waiting (1996) was written as incidental music to the play *Conversation in Colour* by the late playwright Alric Sumner (1952-2000), who was a Lecturer in Performance Writing at Dartington College of Arts. The work was produced at Dartington and the Tate Gallery, St Ives, and was described by the author as ‘a play about a gay relationship, illness and time – long twisting sentences using colour rather than time to structure the minimal narrative’. Finnissey’s title refers to the lines in the text which serve as cues for the beginning of the music, which continues underneath the dialogue, and serves as a commentary upon events within the lives of the characters.

Eighteenth-Century Novels: Fanny Hill (2006) was a 60th birthday commission by the York Late Music Festival and first performed there by the composer and myself in 2006. Even more abstract than *Wild Flowers*, this piece is constructed entirely from gnarled series of tiny gestures and individual pointillistic pitches, varying in density (between furious and more measured passages) in both parts, which are played independently. The work is in two movements, the second somewhat sparser than the first. The world of relentless, obsessive, untrammelled, sometimes deviant, and dangerous sexual activity portrayed in John Cleland’s novel *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748) finds a parallel in the combination of slightly nervous and hypersensitive lines regularly interspersed with evocations of demoniacal pleasure.

Programme notes © Ian Pace 2017, based in part upon information kindly supplied by Michael Finnissey.



PROGRAMME: Concert 2

Michael Finnissy's *Yso* (2007) is one of a series of 'kit' pieces composed in the 1990s and 2000s, consisting of a range of musical materials which can be assembled together by a flexible group of players in a variety of ways. The work was commissioned by the Festival ReMusica, Prishtina, and alludes to folk music from southern Albania (using collections supplied by the festival's director Rafet Rudi), specifically 'Yso-polyphony', a tradition which has been declared a 'living national treasure' by UNESCO. The term *Yso* refers to a drone, which is used in rhythmic or continuous manners (or both) in polyphonic southern Albanian songs. Finnissy delineates three categories of material: a foreground which is highly soloistic, volatile and expressive; a middleground consisting of two individually characterised lines played simultaneously by each instrument in the group (representing one form of group playing in Yso-polyphony); and a background consisting of a slow-moving, sustained and undulating texture (more like the continuous drone of this music).

Stille Thränen (2009) is a piano duet work in four sections, part of which was originally written to be played (by Finnissy and Mark Knoop) at my wedding to Lindsay Edkins, in Islington, on September 5th, 2009; the complete version was played by the composer and myself at Clothworkers' Hall, Leeds University, on October 23rd, 2010. The title comes from the tenth song in Schumann's cycle *Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner*, op. 35, which its characteristic contour of a semitone followed by a minor sixth, then a stepwise progression down to the tonic.

Nº 10.
Sehr langsam.

Du bist vom Schlaf er - stan - den

und wan - delst durch die Au, da

Robert Schumann, 'Stille Thränen', Op. 35 No. 10.

The relationship of Finnissy's work to its source is very free indeed; as in the recent piano cycle *Beethoven's Robin Adair* (2012-15), Finnissy transforms his material into a series of very different configurations, whether into flurries of angular lines in the first piece, a lyrical configuration in the second which is closest to the original, with Schumann's

melody re-arranged as fragments, a hushed and mysterious third piece which is like the flip-side of the coin compared to the second, then a more charming final piece (*Etwas kokett*, like Schumann's 'Der Hidalgo', op. 30 no. 3) returning to Schumann's repeated chords.

Runnin' Wild (1978), for voice or wind instrument, is one of a series of Finnissy's works from the 1970s which take their cue from jazz or blues standards (others include *Moon's goin' down* (1980) for voice and *We'll get there someday* (1978) for piano). 'Runnin' wild' is especially well known in the version by the country/Delta blues version by Charley Patton. But Finnissy reworks this as a type of composed free atonal jazz, drawing upon his own experiences playing piano for jazz dance classes of Matt Mattox, and other playing of this type. The piece, which alternates sustained lines with wild and rapid quasi-improvisational playing, does not so much resemble the standard as capture some of Finnissy's understanding of its emotional state in a contemporary musical language.

Anninnia (1981-82) is one of a series of pieces based on Sardinian folk music (the others are *Duru-duru* (1981) for voice and three instruments, *Andimironnai* (1981) for cello, and *Taja* (1986) for piano) from the period in Finnissy's compositional career when he was most intensely concentrated on folk-music. It was first performed by Jane Manning and David Mason at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival on November 27th, 1985. The title refers to a Sardinian traditional lullaby (like *Ninna nanna* in Italian), always sung by a woman, and draws upon music and text from three songs of this name from the collection *Musica Sarda: Canti e danze popolari*, originally released in 1973 (now available on CD together with a book of the same name by Diego Carpitella, Pietro Sassu and Leonardo Sole (Udine: Neta, 2011)). These songs are in a low register, and consist of repetitive undulations around a few pitches with small microtonal inflections, and regular figures of a rising perfect fourth. Finnissy's piece is much more charged, diffuse and high-pitched, playing off long and quite strident lines for the singer against explosive and dense writing for the piano, but with increasing dynamic variation and separation of the two parts until the music comes to rest at the conclusion.

Aninnar' anninnia	Aninnar' anninnia
Aite non drummias	Why don't you sleep
E no istes sonni sonni	You don't want to sleep
Nanninnia	Nanninnia
A su 'izu meu	My son
Prus de lizu biancu	More white lillies
Su 'izu meu	My son
Annninni' anninnia	Annninni' anninnia
Lealu su reposu	Sleep is good
Aninnar' anninnia	A ninnar' anninnia
Preziosu tesoro	Precious treasure
Su 'izu meu	My son
Ti pota 'I der manna	So good to see you
Essendu sanu e forti	Being well and strong
Anninnia 'ninnia	Anninnia 'ninnia
Nanninnia	Nanninnia
Su 'izu meu	My son
Fizu meu 'e su coro	Son of my heart
Annini' anninnia	Annini' anninnia

E mai mi' enzas mancu	Never fail me
Nanninnia	Nanninnia
A-Aninnar' anninina	A-Aninnar' anninina
Lealu su reposu	Sleep is good
Fizu meu 'e su coro	Son of my heart
Su 'izu meu	My son
Lealu su reposu	Sleep is good
E mai mi' enzas mancu	Never fail me
Su 'izu meu	My son
Su 'izu meu	My son
Fizu meu 'e su coro	Son of my heart
Biancu biancu prus de lizu	More white white lillies
Essendu sanu e forti	Being well and strong
Du scis ca ses s mia	You know you are mine
Fizu fizu meu 'e su coro	Son son of my heart
E no istes sonni sonni	You don't want to sleep
Aninnar' anninnia anninnia	Aninnar' anninnia anninnia
Biancu prus de lizu	More white lillies
Su 'izu meu	My son
Anninni' anninnia	Anninni' anninnia
Aite non drummias	Why don't you sleep
E no istes sonni sonni	You don't want to sleep
Nanninnia	Nanninnia
Du scis ca ses sa mia	You know you are mine
Su 'izu meu	My son
Preziosu Tesoro	Precious treasure
Nanninnia	Nanninnia
Ad' essir ell'e candú	Who knows when
Su 'izu meu	My son
Anninni' anninnia	Anninni' anninnia
Chi sanes d'ogni bua	Clears every ill
Aninnar' ninniar'	Aninnar' ninniar'
Su ninnidu ti ruà	This song comes to pass
Anninni' anninnia	Anninni' anninnia
Ad' essir ell'e candú	Who knows when
Fizu meu 'e su coro	Son of my heart
Anninni' anninnia	Anninni' anninnia
Ti pota 'ider manna	I can see you big
Nanninnia chi sanes d'ogni bua	Nanninnia clears every ill
Aninnar' anninnia	Aninnar' anninnia
E mai mi' enzas mancu	Never fail me
Aninnar' anninnia anninnia	Aninnar' anninnia anninnia
Lealu su reposu	Sleep is good
Lealu su reposu	Sleep is good
Su ninnidu ti ruà	This song comes to pass
Su ninnidu ti ruà	This song comes to pass

Perdonami perdona	Forgive me, forgive
S'in casu t'offendi mamma	If you by chance upset mama
Perdonami perdona	Forgive me, forgive
Cand' as' a cssiri manna	When you get bigger
Anninni' anninnia	Anninni' anninnia
S'in casu t'offendi mamma	If you by chance upset mama
Su 'izu meu	My son
Su ninnidu ti ruà	This song comes to pass
Lealu su re posu	Sleep is good
Lealu su re posu.	Sleep is good

Ulpirra (1982-83), for bass flute, is one of a series of pieces Finnissy composed during a period spent teaching in Victoria College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia, in the early 1980s, all based upon Aboriginal music or culture (the others are *Teangi* (1982) for ensemble, *Warara* (1982, rev. 1991) for voice and five players, *Aijal* (1982) for flute, oboe and percussion, *Banumbirr* (1982, rev. 1986) for small ensemble, *Marrngu* (1982) for E-flat clarinet, *Hikkai* (1982-83) for piano, and *Ouraa* (1982-83) for ensemble). The title refers to a type of central Australian pipe or elementary trumpet which was used by Aboriginal men to create a magic charm upon women who they might thus obtain as their wives. Finnissy's music mediates between seductive lines permeated by tremolos and longer pitches with small *glissandi*, leading to two more strident climaxes in higher registers.

Pavasiya (1979) for oboe and oboe d'amore has a Native American source – the Hopi people of Northern Arizona – with a title which means 'Song of Creation', according to Frank Waters' *Book of the Hopi* (New York: Viking, 1963). There are seven such Hopi songs, whose durations corresponding to positions of the seven stars of the Pleiades (*Chööchökam* – The Harmonious Ones, the Stars That Cling Together) which are seen to symbolise seven universes. Finnissy's piece is accordingly structured in seven sections, each characterised by a different type of figuration (some ultra-virtuosic), separated by silences.

The series of pieces in Finnissy's 'mini-cabaret' (a format he has given often, in homage to the late Richard Rodney Bennett) will be announced by the composer.

Zortziko (2009) was originally an orchestral piece, commissioned for the 30th Anniversary of the Basque National Orchestra in 2012. Finnissy and seven other composers were each asked to provide 'a brief outsider's view of the Basque country and its culture'. He chose to allude to the most famous folk-dance, the *Zortziko*, which has 5 beats to the bar, with dotted rhythms in the second/third and fourth/fifth. The melody comes from the *Procesion de Oñate*, from a collection of Basque folk music presented to Finnissy by his student and friend Gabriel Erkoreka. After the premiere of the orchestral work on January 13th, 2012, Finnissy made a transcription for piano duet, though replacing the dense final section of the earlier piece. This piece is in three sections, all variations upon the basic melody, the first rapid, boisterous and robust, the second gnomic and delicate, the third a more sustained but intimate development.

The *Duet* (1971-2013) had a long gestation, beginning with several versions, one of which – for piano and percussion – was played at the Royan Festival in 1975, then withdrawn and revised more recently. Its source is Diabelli's 'Duet in D', the Sonata in D, op. 33, which Finnissy cites as one of the earliest pieces of music he can remember, and which he would play with his great aunt Rosie Louise Hopwood. But once again Finnissy freely

modifies the source towards his own end, in particular to remove much of a sense of harmonic directionality and goal-orientation. The two parts are vertically aligned for about half of the piece, and then the players continue independently, though whilst responding to one another. The piece culminates in a figure with both pianists play until they coincide, then linger on this before fading out.

The image shows a musical score for Anton Diabelli's Sonata in D, op. 33, first movement. The score is for three parts: Primo, Secundo, and a grand piano (P and S). The Primo part starts with a 'Maestoso' tempo and a forte (f) dynamic, then transitions to a 'p dolce' dynamic. The Secundo part also starts with 'Maestoso' and 'f', then transitions to a 'p' dynamic. The grand piano part starts with a 'Maestoso' tempo and a forte (f) dynamic, then transitions to a 'loco' tempo and a forte (f) dynamic. The score is written in D major and 3/4 time.

Anton Diabelli, Sonata in D, op. 33, first movement.

Finnissy has written about his *Gershwin Arrangements* (1975-88):

I've known Gershwin's music since I was a child (like Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Richard Rogers and Gilbert and Sullivan) it was music my parents, and other close family, played on the gramophone. This is what most people in the 1940s did. These show-tunes were also what most people wanted to hear in the 1960s, and so what I played at gatherings, parties, bars, jazz-dance classes. I had crib-sheets for the half-dozen GG songs I used, and I worked one or two of them up over the three or four years I was doing this kind of work. I only made one 'more elaborate' version (Love is here to stay) and worked this over again when I decided to offer it (as a suitable concert 'encore') to the Five Centuries Ensemble, whom I had heard play at Royan in 1974, and who had asked me to send them stuff. They shortly asked me to compose a piece for them (Commedia dell' Incomprensibile Potere...), and the ensemble encore (for soprano, counter-tenor, 'cello and harpsichord) was put on one side. It was too blatantly 'atonal' to match the other piece when I actually started writing the set of GG 'Arrangements'. [...]

The period these songs were written (1918 - 1938) was one of the most disastrous in recent history, political turmoil and deceit, economic catastrophe. I like the description 'dancing on the edge of a volcano' although this does not mention the complex of other ingredients - Eastern-European background, celebrity status, aspiration to write 'serious' concert music....

Gershwin's music is mostly conceived with clear hierarchies between melody and harmony, this is by no means necessarily the case for Finnissy. Gershwin's inner parts, essentially harmonic filling, or accompaniments, are transformed into more amorphous chromatic lines, avoiding repeated pitches, defamiliarising the sense of tonality and thus recontextualising the melody, which is presented without significant modification.

'They're writing songs of love, but not for me', was inspired by the heartbreaking rendition by Judy Garland in the film *Girl Crazy* (1943) – intimate, inwardly-focused, resigned, but retaining a quality of innocence. Finnissy employs a repeated figure of a falling minor second preceded by a larger interval, as a reference to Liszt's *La lugubre gondola I* (also used in *The History of Photography in Sound*). When the melody is configured in chords accompanied by an underlying flow of quavers, in the manner of many of Rachmaninoff's most well-known piano works, this figuration is allowed to permeate the accompaniment, adding unresolved dissonant progressions as if an omen of death.

APRÈS-MIDI DADA (2006) is another 'kit' piece, like *Yso*, and a homage to the Dada movement, and in particular Marcel Duchamp's celebrated canvas *Nude descending a staircase (No. 2)* (1913) – the kit accordingly includes optional parts for nude actors. The riotousness of Dada is configured nonetheless within quiet dynamics, never rising above *mp*, so as to add a Debussyian quality, as implied by part of the title. It is made up of various layers of activity produced by independently executed parts: a continuous type of 'ostinato' for two obligatory keyboard players; an 'erratum' for plucked strings; graphic scores performed on unpitched percussion; a performer on coffee grinder who has explicit instructions; and up to six wind or vocal parts, more soloistic, which act as an 'overlay' to the texture.

Programme notes © Ian Pace 2017. Translation of the text to *Anninnia* my own, via the Italian translation printed in *Musica Sarda*. With thanks to Michael Finnissy for thoughts on some of the pieces, and to Tullis Rennis for further helpful thoughts.



NOTES ON *CONTINUUM* *SIMULACRUM*

Patrícia Sucena de Almeida

‘Pour moi, le bruit du Temps d’est pas triste: j’aime les cloches, les horloges, les montres – et je me rappelle qu’à l’origine, le materiel photographique relevait des techniques de lébénisterie et de la mécanique de précision: les appareils, au fond, étaient des horloges à voir, et peut-être en moi, quelqu’un de très ancien entend encore dans l’appareil photographique le bruit vivant du bois.’

‘For me the noise of Time is not sad: I love bells, clocks, watches — and I recall that at first photographic implements were related to techniques of cabinetmaking and the machinery of precision: cameras, in short, were clocks for seeing, and perhaps in me someone very old still hears in the photographic mechanism the living sound of the wood.’

Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire: Note sur la photographie / Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (translated Richard Howard).

Ian Pace, knowing my work as a photographer, proposed to develop a project relating to Michael Finnissy's *The History of Photography in Sound* and I decided to focus in particularly on Chapter No. 6 (*Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*), the first to be completed by the composer.

The resulting work is a book-box including 29 A5 printed photographs, which almost fit in ones' hands, entitled *continuum simulacrum* (a continuous collection of images/spectrum(s)), which has been 'composed' like a new musical work with a series of 'sounding images' organised in multiple parts (similarly to the *HoPiS* episodes relating to the poets) and connected by three quotations from Barthes's *La chambre claire* (1980), offering a space for reflection. A fourth one is printed directly inside on the left side of the book-box. The 'created object' can be considered as an 'open work' and maybe the first step which will continue with works relating to the other Chapters; or alternatively as a frozen memory. The five samples available are to be manipulated by the audience, as a personal object, and placed on some of the seats (performance space). After this concert part, which includes Chapters 5, 6, 7: *Alkan-Paganini; Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets; Eadweard Muybridge-Edvard Munch*, the 'personal objects' must be placed on another chair by the audience members who had them in their possession. A slideshow including some of the photographs (main series) plus quotations is also shown in a small screen, outside the performance space.

‘Imaginairement, la Photographie (celle don’t j’ai l’intention) représente ce moment très subtil où, à vrai dire, je ne suis ni un sujet ni un objet, mais plutôt un sujet qui se sent devenir objet : je vis alors une micro-expérience de la mort...’

'In terms of image-repertoire, the Photographer (the one I intend) represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death...'

Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire / Camera Lucida*.

The construction of this object was influenced by the form of an old small and easily portable camera (a daguerreotype camera – Maison Susse Frères, 1839, with a lens by Charles Chevalier) and its elements, specifically the two case units; the daguerreotypes and their small size; the usual type of casing and display – like a *passepourtout*, a thin sheet of cardboard. Most cases were small and light enough to easily carry in a pocket, into lockets, watch fobs, jewel caskets, the handles of walking sticks, in brooches, bracelets, the cover glass or crystal, etc.; the protective hinged cover usually provided. The process of making of the daguerreotypes, as in some of the photos chosen, acts like a type of spectre, which seems to have fumes and vapours in front of it, not only floating in space but also providing an illusion of reality.

'La photo est littéralement une emanation du référent. D'un corps réel, qui était là, sont parties des radiations qui viennent me toucher, moi qui suis ici; peu importe la durée de la transmission; la photo de l'être disparu vient me toucher comme les rayons différés d'une étoile.'

'The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.'

Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire / Camera Lucida*.

The 29 photographs are divided in 7 groups, with single 'identity' photographs (window – clock – shop window with puppets heads with hats), documents/material taken from different moments, periods, locations, then remembered, reinvented and placed in a *continuum*, allowing them to be imagined anywhere in space and time, used in another context, to create other stories and open doors to other experiences. As Finnissy mentions, 'These refugee facts are then situated, more or less provocatively, in the eventual composition. They are exchanged for, disrupted, and transformed by composing... into other facts.' (Introduction, *HoPiScore*).

Even though characterized by stillness, within the 7 groups and in between them we can feel a sense of motion and somehow find links between them: the window (single photograph) through where we can explore different ambiances, even blurred (nature in group 1 and city in group 6), and construct various life stories; found objects (groups 3 and 7) neatly preserved, simply collected and exhibited or found in abandoned sites (group 7); the clock (single photograph) reminding not only of time passing but also linking to Finnissy's words – 'As the seconds tick by, an image begins to form on the paper. If extracted too quickly from the liquid this image will not be fully and clearly visible, if left too long it will be spoiled. The clocks tick, my hand moves, sounds appear.' (Introduction, *HoPiScore*); the puppet and flower (main series, group 4) presented as a studio montage dealing with opposed fields as sensitivity-emptiness of feelings and thoughts, dedicated to the seventeen immortal homosexual poets, each one with their precise 'touch' and mission

to melt this coldness (emptiness) into ways to fulfil our hearts/brains using their 'words'; the flowers (group 5) which seem the resulting mixed product from body parts and flower (from the main series); the religious images as spectrum(s) (group 2), haunting our eyes as sounds haunt our ears, and reminding one of the use of Bach Chorale as a thread during the Chapter No. 6; the shop window with a few rows with puppets with hats and other objects (single photograph) symbolizing not only the poets but also idealized non-identity, gender, race.

In between the photographs, bearing in mind the influence of three authors - Benjamin, Sontag and Barthes - not only in Finnissy's work but also as personal preferences and mentioned during our classes, there are three quotations (as referred before) from Barthes' *La chambre claire* (1980) included between the photos's *continuum*, and a fourth one printed directly inside, on the left side of the book-box.

Their function is to offer space for reflection, working as a break in order to jump into other 'worlds', but also towards the other printed photographs. There is a link between the quotations, creating a 'short story', starting with '*Pour moi*' (1st quote), '*Imaginairement*' (2nd quote), '*La Photo*' (3rd quote) and acting as an explanation, though not a conclusive one. Some of the words also have the character P (photographie, spectre, parties), used as a means to construct another 'story' but also characterising the choice and qualities of the chosen images: *Photographie* - 'documents', departing from different times, spaces, moments; *parties* - 'episodes' or 'departing from...' and finally; *spectre(s)* of a certain reality or vision which can be changed by our interpretation. The character P also reminds us the words Photography and Poets.

As with Finnissy's chapter, this photographic *continuum simulacrum* is organized in groups (different ones corresponding to the sections for the individual poets) connected by quotations ('mélanges' as referred by the composer) which serve as a means for reflection (a space to reflect) but also insisting upon the same material; in this case, it is a way to think about photography creating other 'images' with words, even metaphorically. So, all the photographs included seem to be a montage of sections of a film.

'Lorsqu'on définit la Photo comme une image immobile, cela ne veut pas dire seulement que les personnages qu'elle représente ne bougent pas; cela veut dire qu'ils ne sortent pas : ils sont anesthésiés et fichés, comme des papillons.'

'When we define the Photograph as a motionless image, this does not mean only that the figures it represents do not move; it means that they do not emerge, do not leave: they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies.'

Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire / Camera Lucida*.

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Collaborators on *continuum simulacrum*: Jorge Simões (T.art); Maria Ferreira (Chronospaper); Film (slideshow): Daniel Antero.

Michael Finnissy and The History of Photography in Sound

Ian Pace

'History' (that which is always being forgotten and newly remembered, and created)

'Photography' (which records things as they seem to be)

'Sound' (the magma of music before the 'obscene formulae' of Plato and the many western Europeans theorists who followed)

History (a record of thing sometimes in WRITING – 'the random site of all promiscuities, of non-discrimination' - Jean Baudrillard)

*Photography (a 'voyeuristic relationship' with the world, levelling the meaning of events
'Photography is the inventory of mortality' - Susan Sontag)*

SOUND - That which is HEARD (as distinct from SEEN or TOUCHED)

Michael Finnissy

Ian Pace's monograph *Michael Finnissy's "The History of Photography in Sound": A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation* (London: Divine Art, 2013, revised 2017), from which some of the note below is adapted, can be downloaded for free from <http://www.divine-art.co.uk/CD/77501info.htm> or <http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/2875/> .

Origins and Design

Some early ideas for the *History of Photography in Sound* were first conceived in 1995, the year before my concert series of Finnissy's then complete piano works, but composition of the work began properly in 1997, perhaps in part motivated by the sort of self-awareness that could be engendered through hearing the totality of his output for piano up until that time, perceiving its boundaries, and thus being able to apprehend clearly areas for future development. First conceived as a somewhat smaller work than eventually resulted, the *History* was originally to be in nine chapters and appears in projected form in this manner in the work list of *Uncommon Ground*.¹ These were structured in five books:

¹ See Henrietta Brougham, Christopher Fox and Ian Pace (eds), *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 397.

Book 1: *Le démon de l'analogie*

Book 2: *Landscapes*

2.1 *The wakening of intractable reality*

2.2 *North American Spirituals*

Book 3: *Portraiture*

3.1 *Alkan-Paganini*

3.2 *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*

3.3 *Eadweard Muybridge – Edvard Munch*

Book 4: *Documentation*

4.1 *Unsere Afrikareise*

4.2 *Click!*

Book 5: *Etched bright with sunlight*

2.1 was also at one point to be entitled *Canada: From its origins to the present day*, but this title was soon dropped. It was to be a Canadian counterpart to *North American Spirituals*, featuring a wide range of materials collected by the Canadian pianist Marc Couroux. Few of these were ultimately used; those which were appear in the final section of *Le réveil*, and are buried within *North American Spirituals*.

The piece *Click!* only ever existed as an idea, which probably did not really correspond to either *Kapitalistisch Realisme* or *Wachtend*. Finnissy first composed the pieces in Book 3, all in 1997 (in order *Poets*, *Alkan-Paganini*, *Muybridge-Munch*), followed by the *Spirituals* in the same year. I premiered the *Poets* in the British Music Information Centre on May 1st, 1997 (the same day as the General Election which ushered in a landslide Labour victory after 18 years of Conservative rule), having earlier in the year performed sections of the work. *Unsere Afrikareise*, which I also premiered in a concert in Cheltenham, followed in 1998, as did *North American Spirituals*. It was at this point that Finnissy decided to add an extra two chapters, stemming from the decision to compose *My parents' generation* in 1999, following the death of his mother. This necessitated a long counterpart later on in the cycle. This was to be, of course *Kapitalistisch Realisme*. From here onwards, the remaining chapters were composed simultaneously (some had been part-sketched already). *Le réveil* was completed in 1999, *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* and *Etched bright with sunlight* were both completed early in 2000, as was the remainder of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, then *Wachtend* and finally *Le démon*, all followed in a flood of productivity from that year. The cycle was finished in Autumn 2000, before my first complete performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London on January 28th, 2001. I have subsequently performed the cycle complete in Leuven, Glasgow, Montréal, Southampton and Oxford, as well as continuing often to play individual chapters.

In the version presented in the world premiere, the cycle had a different order to the final version, and was still structured into 'books'. The last four pieces then were, in order: *Wachtend*, *Unsere Afrikareise*, *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Etched*. *Le démon* and *Etched* both formed self-contained books (under the titles above), whilst the other pieces were formed into books with the titles from above, each book with three pieces in. However, this order proved unsatisfactory, mostly because of the relative position of the

last two pieces. After the monumental *Kapitalistisch Realisme, Etched* felt somewhat like an incidental epilogue, even a bagatelle, thus diminishing its impact. Finnissy decided upon a new order of performance, and also removed the 'books', describing it simply as in eleven chapters, before the second complete performance, which I gave in Leuven, Belgium. In 2002, Finnissy made some further modifications to *Wachtend*, which was given a new beginning and a comprehensive re-composition of the last section. The version then resulting is final and definitive.

The title remains enigmatic and polysemic: 'History' can be understood as referring variously to musical history, wider social and political history, and Finnissy's own personal 'history' (especially in *My parents' generation*), as well as a particular mode of historical consciousness which acts upon the present; 'Photography' refers obviously to the medium (both still and moving pictures), and in particular the thought of three intellectuals whose ideas informed the composition of the work – Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes.² Benjamin's famed essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility' is concerned with how the principle of reproducibility, fundamental to both photography and film, removes the 'aura' of the unique artwork, noting:

In even the most perfect reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place. It is this unique existence – and nothing else – that bears the mark of the history to which the work has been subject. This history includes changes to the physical structure of the work over time, together with any changes in ownership.³

Finnissy's work investigates quite exhaustively the possibility of removing something from a unique existence in a particular context; his musical materials assume different meanings, depending upon the circumstances in which they are presented.

Sontag argues that photography's effect is almost always corrosive, writing that:

To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge -- and, therefore, like power. A now notorious first fall into alienation, habituating people to abstract the world into printed words, is supposed to have engendered that surplus of Faustian energy and psychic damage needed to build modern, inorganic societies. But print seems a less treacherous form of leaching out the world, of turning it into a mental object, than photographic images, which now provide most of the knowledge people have about the look of the past and the reach of the present. What is written about a person or an event is frankly an interpretation, as are handmade visual statements, like paintings and drawings. Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire.⁴

Finnissy's work continuously attempts to navigate this aspect of his musical 'photographs', especially when employing materials so politically loaded as African-American spirituals or folk music from both North and sub-Saharan Africa. Sontag also includes in her book

² Specifically Walter Benjamin's essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility', which exists in three versions, the last (and most commonly known) of which can be found in English in Benjamin, *Selected Writings : Volume 4, 1938-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 250-283 – I refer subsequently to this version; Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Allen Lane, 1978); and Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: The Noonday Press, 1981).

³ Benjamin, 'The Work of Art', third version, p. 253.

⁴ Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 4.

'A Brief Anthology of Quotations' in homage to Benjamin, who imagined a form of criticism entirely made up of quotations,⁵ which is paralleled in the many passages of the *History* featuring strings of clearly referential material.

Barthes takes a more positive view of still photography, which maybe comes closest to encapsulating Finnissy's attitude towards the many musics he encounters and 'photographs':

I decided then to take as a guide for my new analysis the attraction I felt for certain photographs. For of this attraction, at least, I was certain. What to call it? Fascination? No, this photograph which I pick out and which I love has nothing in common with the shiny point which sways before your eyes and makes your head swim; what it produces in me is the very opposite of hebetude; something more like an internal agitation, an excitement, a certain labor too, the pressure of the unspeakable which wants to be spoken. Well, then? Interest? Of brief duration; I have no need to question my feelings in order to list the various reasons to be interested in a photograph; one can either desire the object, the landscape, the body it represents; or love or have loved the being it permits us to recognize; or be astonished by what one sees; or else admire or dispute the photographer's performance, etc.; but these interests are slight, heterogeneous; a certain photograph can satisfy one of them and interest me slightly; and if another photograph interests me powerfully, I should like to know what there is in it that sets me off.⁶

For the writings contained in this note and elsewhere, I have been privileged to have access to all of Finnissy's sketches for the work, enabling me to reconstruct a good deal of the compositional processes involved (these are set out in detail in the monograph, and hopefully will be of interest especially to composers wanting to learn more about Finnissy's technique). In most pieces Finnissy generates the basic categories of material first of all, then cuts them up into sections create a musical montage from these, very much in the manner of a film editor. Longer expanses of material usually contain 'inserts' of other material (by no means obviously so from the final score – some such inserts are connected seamlessly to the surrounding music). Often there will be left-over material, like cinematic 'rushes'. This material is either discarded, used elsewhere in the cycle, or even used in a later piece (and similarly some rushes from earlier pieces find their way into the *History*).

In the case of the various chapters that are made up in large part from references to other chapters (in particular *Le démon*, *Le réveil*, *Wachtend* and *Etched*) one will sometimes (but again, by no means always) find in the sketches collections of pages that are divided up with a red pen into numbered fragments, from which Finnissy makes selections. Other times one will find simply the name of the chapter, section, or reference that Finnissy uses, and some time has to be spent searching through the source for the particular short excerpt used (a good example of this would be the passages from Grieg's *Slåtter* used in *Muybridge-Munch*). In either case, one will encounter lists of numbers at the tops of pages, some of them crossed through with lines. These usually indicate random selections, crossed through when they have been used.

Finnissy's approach to composition in successive stages also becomes instantly apparent from these or other sketches. Rarely is a piece worked on from where it will eventually begin, then onwards in linear succession. Rather, he more commonly works

⁵ Benjamin, 'Program for Literary Criticism', in *Selected Writings: Volume 2, Part 1, 1927-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 294.

⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 18-19.

first on the most important types of material, then on longer passages which frequently cross reference other places, then on a selection of 'inserts' which are interspersed within the longer passages. One finds lots of workings, re-workings, deletions of material, sometimes in separate smaller oblong sheets of manuscript paper, then various manuscript books which have some of the large-scale sections of the work more or less in order (though sometimes he omits this stage before copying out the score neatly), and lots of sheets with numbered or lettered pages of the inserts. The manuscript books contain indicators for where the inserts will be included (frequently some of them are omitted from the final version). Reading through the sketches illuminates very clearly how much the act of composition is, for Finnissy, akin to shooting and then editing a film.

From Finnissy's *ad hoc* modifications of his basic material (which are numerous and constitute a key stage of mediation), one can observe certain consistent preferences, such as for wide contours and spread chords, for constantly mutating pulses and tonalities, and for a general ostentatiousness and extravagance of result. When dealing with his original sources, he tends to extract fragments in ways that blur the sense of key or metre, for example taking out a group of five quavers that cross the barline in a pair of 4/4 bars. One way of describing his compositional work would be as a combination of two metaphors: *discovery* on one hand and *appropriation* on the other. The techniques and references provide the discovery, they throw up all sorts of material, ideas, possibilities; the editing and fine-tuning provide the appropriation, in the sense of Finnissy's 'making the music his own'. This is a simplification, of course; the former processes constitute appropriation as well in other senses. Nonetheless, it does provide a reasonably vivid picture of how such composition is enacted.



Some Aspects of the Structure of the *History* as a Whole

The cycle is structured in a quasi-palindromic fashion around the central piece, the *Poets*, the first to be completed. This piece contains the greatest proliferation of material, whilst the two surrounding it, *Alkan-Paganini* and *Muybridge-Munch*, develop a vastly smaller amount extensively. Then the other pieces can generally be organised into pairs which share common material and concerns, but from different perspectives. One can pair *My parents' generation* with *Kapitalistisch Realisme* (the two being the longest pieces in the cycle as well as sharing material), *North American Spirituals* with *Unsere Afrikareise* (both dealing with appropriations of non-Western or non-white musics), and *Le démon* with *Etched* (the first a sort of overall survey of the material from a distance, the last a frenetic recapitulation of much of it, each with prominent Berlioz quotations). The link between *Le réveil* and *Wachtend* is more tenuous; both entail perspectives upon other material, but in quite different ways. The group of pieces coming after the *Poets* obviously constitute a much longer duration than those before it, mostly on account of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, which is itself almost as long as Finnissy's previous longest work prior to the *History*, *Folklore*. So the symmetry is far from exact.

Register is also an important structural determinant: the vast majority of the piece takes place in the central registers of the instrument (as with the earlier work *Folklore*), with the ventures into the extremes - including those moments that seem to encompass the whole keyboard simultaneously - very much the exception rather than the rule. The following is a breakdown of the predominance of registers in each piece.

1. *Le démon*: central registers, but ending in the bass.
2. *Le réveil*: central registers, expanding to whole compass of keyboard in the centre.
3. *North American Spirituals*: central registers, occasional sorties elsewhere.
4. *My parents' generation*: central registers, long treble episode early on, two major expansions to whole compass.
5. *Alkan-Paganini*: bass – treble – whole keyboard – treble.
6. *Seventeen Immortal Poets* – alternating whole keyboard and central registers continuously.
7. *Muybridge-Munch* – low treble – whole treble register – central registers – whole keyboard.
8. *Kapitalistisch Realisme* – central registers for most of the piece, except for brief section connecting *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* and *Sizilianische Männerakte*.
9. *Wachtend* – central registers, with some variety.
10. *Unsere Afrikareise* – central registers. Wider in pointillistic section, but still relatively central.
11. *Etched* – high treble – treble – low bass – central registers – whole keyboard.

Only the three central movements (*Muybridge-Munch* least so) and *Etched* really extensively alternate different registers of the keyboard, one reason why these tend to sound the most brilliant and variegated of all.

Dynamics are also less extreme than in many earlier Finnissy works, though there are major exceptions. Both *My parents' generation* and *Unsere Afrikareise* have extended periods at extremely quiet dynamics, and there is a comparable moment in *Etched* as the music prepares for the appearance of the Berlioz theme. The *Muybridge* section of *Muybridge-Munch* also remains at a relatively quiet dynamic throughout, though less

extreme. The final section of the *Poets* is also hushed throughout. The 'Compression' passages are usually (but not always) at a high dynamic and quite violent in nature. Otherwise, moments at extremely loud dynamics are exceptional and usually quite brief. Amongst the most prominent would be those in the second 'popular song' passage of *My parents' generation* and the entry of the two hands in *Alkan-Paganini*. These begin to mirror the 'Compression' material in their violence and density.

Textures vary throughout, but there is less use of extremes in this respect than in Finnissy's earlier works, as well. His characteristic monophonic writing makes a few brief appearances in *Le réveil*, the *Poets*, *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, and *Etched*, but the only truly extended passage occurs at the beginning of *Muybridge-Munch*. Extremes of density tend to occur either in the 'Compression' material or at other moments of extremely loud dynamics. The major exception to this is the last section in the *Poets*.

It is a fruitless question to ask whether the *History* should be considered a 'tonal' or 'atonal' work. Throughout the cycle, one can find localised tonal centres. However, there are marked differences of degree in this respect. The majority of the piece inhabits a fluid, somewhat unstable form of tonality, always in a state of relative flux. So the few moments which exhibit relatively stable tonal centres come to the fore. The most prominent of these are the Massé and David sections in *Unsere Afrikareise*, followed by the spirituals passages at the beginning of *Muybridge-Munch* (more stable than those in the *Spirituals* itself, where they are combined with bass parts which unsettle their implied harmonies). *Sizilianische Männerakte* has a larger degree of tonal stability than most emerging from the retrograded Busoni material, leading this extended passage to have a comparatively radiant quality, as does the beginning of *Kapitalistisch Realisme* to a slightly lesser extent. The Billings/spirituals passages in the *Spirituals* present tonal centres of gravity to varying degrees. In both full Berlioz quotations (in *Le démon* and *Etched*) the tonality is still fluid, but strongly implied by the melody.

Overall, other than in terms of scale, the *History* is thus not to be characterised primarily as a work of extremes, at least not by Finnissy's standards. The balanced and relatively moderate nature of much of the writing causes those more extreme moments to have a huge impact.



Material as Archetype⁷

Almost every commentary on Michael Finnissy draws attention to the range of sources upon which he draws for his composition; nowhere is this truer than in this five-and-a-half hour piano work. Through the course of its eleven chapters, the work employs (often hidden) sources from across the Western classical tradition (in particular music of Bach, Beethoven, Paganini, Berlioz, Alkan, Meyerbeer, Félicien David, Bruckner, Wagner, Busoni and Debussy), through 1940s popular song, music hall songs, hymns from Britain and America, war songs from several countries, African-American spirituals, to folk music from England, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Tunisia, Ethiopia, the Transvaal, and that of Native Americans and the Inuit. Some of these materials recur in various guises throughout the cycle, some have a brief localised development, some appear fleetingly then disappear.

A common response to this phenomenon is provided in the following words from the critic Paul Driver, writing about the première of the cycle *Folklore*, but with words that might equally have been applied to the *History*:

Finnissy creates grippingly surreal landscapes in which one can imagine Percy Grainger – his folklorist hero – cheerfully cycling down an English country lane straight into the mountains of north India and on, by way of a Chinese pagoda and a Scottish glen, into an exploding Chernobyl.⁸

In a review of the premiere of the *History*, Driver similarly described the work as ‘The History of Music in Snapshots’.⁹ But it is this somewhat touristic view of Finnissy’s music that I wish to challenge, and also to give a glimpse of how Finnissy’s engagement with musical ‘found objects’ works on many levels of the composition, both in terms of music-immanent structural working as well as in a conceptual sense.

A major turning point in Finnissy’s output occurred around 1979-80, after the watershed provided by his ensemble composition *alongside*, a highly abstract work taking Finnissy’s achievements in this direction further than at any previous point in his output.¹⁰ Feeling that he wished to change direction, Finnissy then embarked upon several cycles of works alluding to folk music from various regions, as well as bringing to fruition what were then partially-complete projects such as his *Verdi Transcriptions* and *Gershwin Arrangements*.¹¹ Almost all of his works from this point onwards make reference to some other music. This was by no means a wholly new development in 1980; Finnissy’s employment of musical reference can be dated back at least as early as 1967,

⁷ This section was originally given as a paper at the conference on ‘What does ‘musical material’ mean today?’, Royal Musical Association, London, July 4th, 2008, and subsequently at Huddersfield University, Universität der Künste, Berlin, Surrey University and City University, London.

⁸ Paul Driver, ‘The monody lingers on’, review of world première of Finnissy *Folklore*, in *The Sunday Times*, 11th December 1994.

⁹ Paul Driver, ‘Performance Test’, review of world première of Finnissy *History of Photography in Sound*, in *The Sunday Times*, February 4th, 2001.

¹⁰ For a quite general exegesis of the basic structural properties of this work, see Roger Redgate, ‘The Chamber Music’, in Brougham et al, *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 141-148, also see Julian Anderson, ‘The Orchestral Music’, *ibid.* p. 180; for a more informal consideration of the work, Paul Driver, ‘Michael Finnissy’s ‘alongside’’, in *Tempo*, No. 132 (March 1980), pp. 42-45.

¹¹ On these two cycles, see Ian Pace, ‘The Piano Music’, in Brougham et al, *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 86-97. Since the appearance of this book, the *Verdi Transcriptions* have been significantly revised and expanded to become a cycle of about twice the original length in four books.

from which time date his *Romeo and Juliet are Drowning* for piano and first versions of the *Strauss-Walzer*, followed in 1969 by his *Folk Song Set*,¹² not to mention in various juvenilia. Furthermore, whilst not necessarily explicitly referential, the influence of older contemporary composers is palpable in other of his earlier 'abstract' works – for example Pierre Boulez in *Le Dormeur du Val* (1963-64, revised 1966),¹³ Karlheinz Stockhausen in *Song 8* (1967), or Sylvano Bussotti in *Babylon* (1971). However, in many earlier works references or influences generally play a small part within a more abstract framework (this is equally true of his notorious *English Country-Tunes* (1977, rev. 1982)),¹⁴ and as such act essentially as islands of local colour, whereas in the post-1979-80 works the sources inform the music on a multiplicity of levels.

In several of Finnissy's earlier works, he employs broad categories of musical material to delineate structural boundaries or characterise long stretches of music. Most obvious amongst such strategies are his use of register, especially in piano works which contain extended passages at the upper or lower extremes (or both simultaneously), or conversely through the near-simultaneous use of the whole compass of the instrument. But in some orchestral and ensemble works (including *Offshore* (1975-76), *alongside* and *Sea and Sky* (1979-80))¹⁵ he sets up clear oppositions between material which seems implicitly defined in categories of line, chords or punctuation.

Finnissy himself has alluded to a similar strategy at work in the *History*.¹⁶ Whilst not wishing simply to reiterate his own paradigms for cognition, I do find this model compelling in terms of what I experience as both performer and listener. So, first of all, I wish to elaborate upon these categories; whilst accepting Finnissy's own three macro-categories, the conclusions concerning assignation of material to categories, and further sub-divisions therein, are my own. To my mind these are more illuminating than might be provided by a more obvious categorisation in terms of the genres of the source materials (though some of the sub-divisions do relate to this latter grouping).

The three macro-categories are simply Chords, Gestures and Lines. The first of these, Chords, takes its cue from what Finnissy calls the *motive fondamentale* of the work,¹⁷ the plainchant *Te Deum Laudamus* (Fig. 1). This motive, almost always harmonised in some way derived from Bach's setting of a later version in his chorale prelude *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 328 (Fig. 2), appears throughout the cycle.

¹² It is likely that this work was influenced by the appearance of Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* (1964), which Finnissy has cited as an important revelation for him (unpublished draft of Interview for *Uncommon Ground*).

¹³ This work, a setting of Rimbaud, is generally acknowledged as the first within Finnissy's mature output. On its construction and use of quasi-cinematic techniques, see Christopher Fox, 'The Vocal Music', in Brougham et al, *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 218-222.

¹⁴ On *English Country-Tunes*, see Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 66-71.

¹⁵ On *offshore* and *Sea and Sky*, see Anderson, 'The Orchestral Music', pp. 173-187; for an early response to the premiere of *Sea and Sky*, Paul Driver, 'Michael Finnissy's 'Sea and Sky'', *Tempo* No. 133/134 (September 1980), pp. 82-83. Anderson's taxonomy of material categories in these works, in terms of points, line and punctuation, bears some resemblance to the taxonomies I set out here.

¹⁶ Private conversations with the author.

¹⁷ Finnissy describes this as 'the Aristotelian unifying factor, subsuming the following 'variations'' (Finnissy, 'Notes on the Work', to accompany 2002 performance of the *History* by Mark Knoop).



Fig. 1. *Te Deum Laudamus*, as it appears in the sketches for the work.

The characteristics of both this material and that associated with it are above all chordal homophony and harmonic directionality. Variations and exploratory developments of this type are usually 'canonic', in both current senses of the term. The allusions to these tonal sources are often somewhat askew, with deliberately awkward voice leading, interrupted cadences, use of diminished sevenths out of context, etc.

Fig. 3 gives a sample of the chordal material in several sub-categories. In some cases I have given the original material, in some cases its mediated form (and sometimes both), depending on the extent to which the former is recognisable as such – or in terms of some of its essential attributes – in the final work. The first of these, Fig. 3 (a), would include both the fundamental Bach chorale prelude and various others employed within the cycle, also material deriving from the St Matthew Passion and also the *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, a seventeenth century, 540 page, collection of organ music from France which was brought to Canada in 1724, generally regarded as very representative of French organ music at the end of the period.¹⁸ To Finnissy, both this source and indeed some of the Bach material represented a slightly academic form of contrapuntal writing.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, Édition Critique par Élisabeth Gallat-Morin et Kenneth Gilbert, two volumes (St-Hyacinthe, Québec: Les Éditions Jacques Ostiguy Inc., 1985), two volumes. See also <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=U1ARTU0002092> (accessed 21/8/13).

¹⁹ Private conversations with the author.

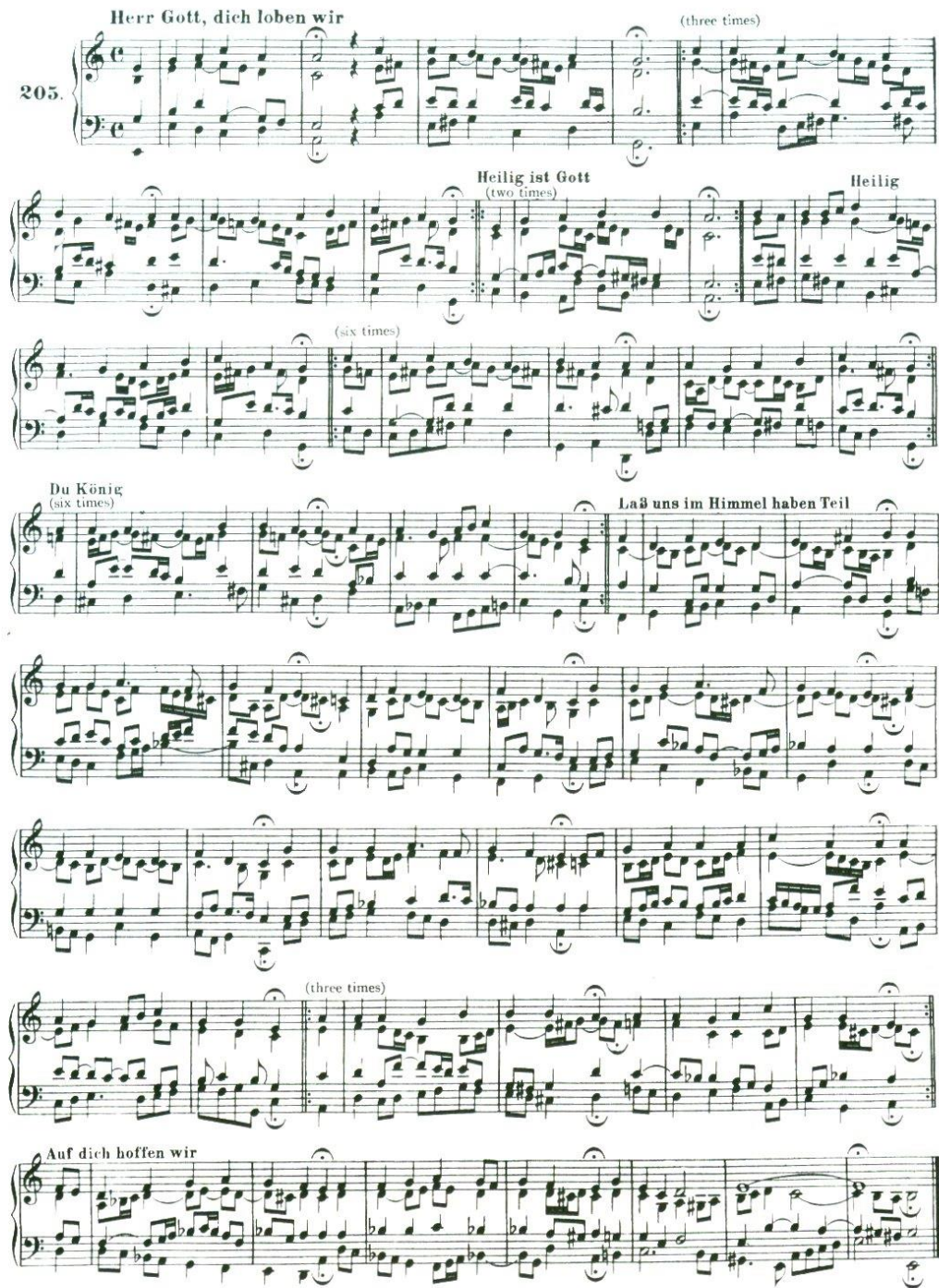


Fig. 2. Bach chorale prelude *Herr Gott, dich loben wir* BWV 328.

The second sub-category, as shown in Fig. 3 (b), contains much of the hymn material, whether from the eighteenth century American choral composer William Billings (1746-1800),²⁰ from traditional English Passiontide hymns,²¹ or Arthur Sullivan's

²⁰ Finnissy employs four hymns by Billings in the chapter *North American Spirituals* – 'Bedford', 'Sing Praises to the Lord', 'Dudley' and 'Essex', taken from Billings, *The Psalm-Singer's Amusement* (1781) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1987); *The Continental Harmony* (1794) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990) (in which it is called 'An Anthem for Thanksgiving Day', pp. 70-75); *The Singing Master's Assistant: Music in Miniature* (1778-1779) (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1984) and *The New England Psalm-Singer* (1770)

renowned ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ (1871),²² as well as the Soviet War Song ‘Sacred War’,²³ which appears in *My parents’ generation thought War meant something*, the fourth chapter of the *History*. This material exhibits much simpler harmonic progressions, with little counterpoint, for singing by amateurs.

The third sub-category (Fig. 3 (c)) contains a variety of material derived (with considerable mediation) from music of Beethoven²⁴ and Bruckner.²⁵ Most of this employs relatively basic chords but in imaginative or visionary progressions. Fig. 3 (c’) shows the appropriate passage in Liszt’s transcription of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, from which the first part of Fig. 3 (c) is derived.

The fourth sub-category (Fig. 3 (d)) derives from material of Wagner (generally from a concatenation of short fragments selected randomly from the sources – *Götterdämmerung* and *Tannhäuser*; the process is shown in Fig. 3 (d’)). This is an extension of (c) with more extravagant chromatic harmonies. Finnissy’s allusion to Liszt’s *La lugubre gondola* (which appears most explicitly in *My parents’ generation*)²⁶ straddles the divide between this and category (c).

The fifth sub-category (Fig. 3 (e)) comes from the *Pezzo serioso* from Busoni’s Piano Concerto,²⁷ which runs throughout the long *Sizilianische Männerakte*, the third section of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*. This is as chromatic as (d), but demonstrates a greater

(Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981), respectively. Billings was of course the subject of an earlier piano piece of Finnissy simply entitled *William Billings* (1990) (discussed in Pace, ‘The Piano Music’, pp. 84-85), itself inspired by John Cage’s *Apartment House 1776* (1976), which also draws upon numerous hymns from Billings.

²¹ Finnissy’s use of these Passiontide hymns originate in the section of *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* devoted to James Kirkup, to signify a form of religious ‘deviance’ in line with Kirkup’s poem ‘The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name’, which was the subject of a now-infamous blasphemy trial in the UK in 1977 after its publication in the British magazine *Gay News*. The hymns he uses are *Rockingham* (‘When I survey the wondrous cross’) by Edward Miller (1731-1807), adapted S. Webbe (1820), *Stabat Mater* from the *Maintzich Gesangbuch* of 1661, adapted Webbe (1782), and *Salve Festa Dies*, written by Vaughan Williams (1905).

²² This hymn appears most clearly in *My parents’ generation thought War meant something*. Sullivan’s was the second setting of words by the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, following an 1868 adaptation of the slow movement of Haydn’s Symphony No. 53 by J.B. Dykes, which was published together with a hymn entitled ‘Bright gleams our banner’ by Henry Smart (1813-1879), with which Sullivan’s setting shares an initial four-note repetition, and may thus have been an influence upon the later song. See Arthur Jacobs, *Arthur Sullivan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 71-72, for comparisons between the two hymns.

²³ This was a song with Russian text by Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, a then well-known song lyric writer who has been described as one of ‘Stalin’s favourite hacks’ (Catherine Merridale, *Ivan’s War: The Red Army 1939-45* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), p. 169), and music by Matvey Blanter, once well-known as a composer of popular and film music in the Soviet Union. The song is collected in Boris Kotlyarov (ed), *Six Soviet War Songs for voice and piano* (London: Novello & Co., for the Soviet State Music Publishing House, 1943), published in Britain at a time when the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union was at its height.

²⁴ Finnissy’s specific sources for Beethoven were the String Quartet in A major op. 18 no. 5, the fifth piano sonata in C minor op. 10, no. 1, and the Fifth Symphony in C minor op. 67, derived in the latter case from Liszt’s version of the work for solo piano.

²⁵ Here the material comes mostly from the Third and Fifth Symphonies of Bruckner.

²⁶ This work also informed Finnissy’s earlier arrangement of Gershwin, ‘They’re writing songs of love, but not for me’, through the employment of a basic gesture consisting of a medium-size descending interval followed by a descending semitone, or its inversion.

²⁷ An engagement with Busoni’s work has been a recurrent concern for Finnissy, especially in the *Verdi Transcriptions*, several of which allude directly to Busoni piano works.

sense of aloofness, discontinuity and objectivisation of its harmonic elements.²⁸ Fig. 3 (e') shows the section from the *Pezzo serioso* from which this example is derived in reverse.

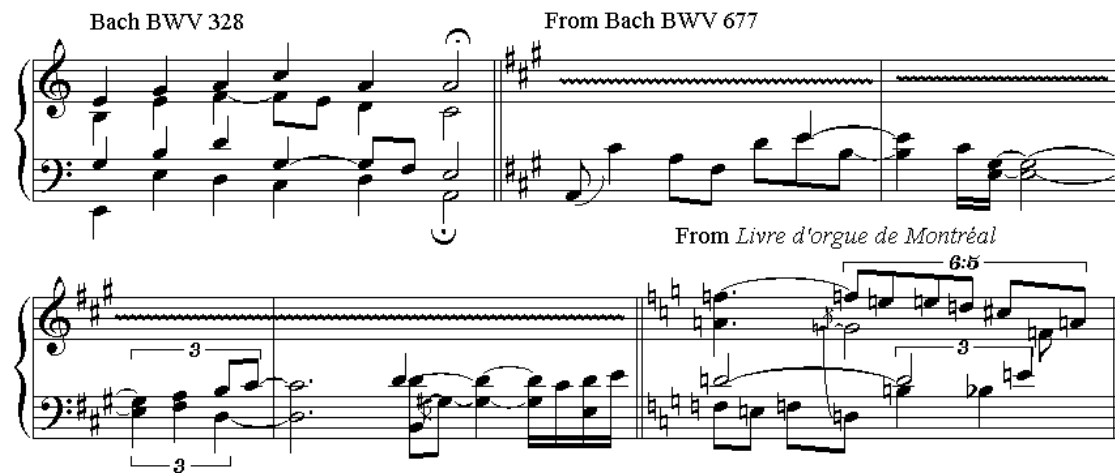


Fig. 3 (a). Chordal category (a).



Fig. 3 (a'). Bach - *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'* BWV 677

²⁸ Here parallels might be drawn with the interpretation of Mahler provided by Adorno, who argues that whilst Mahler's harmonic vocabulary is less extravagant than that of Wagner and others before him, the particular form of contextualisation and defamiliarisation employed entails a step beyond anything hitherto achieved in music ('Mahler's atmosphere is the illusion of familiarity in which the Other is cloaked', Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, translated Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 20).

Billings - *Sing Praises to the Lord* Passiontide hymn - *Rockingham*

Sullivan - 'Onward Christian Soldiers'

'Sacred War', Soviet war song from Second World War

Tho' the fight is hard, we a - rise to guard Our sa - cred mo - ther - land! Re -

Fig. 3 (b). Chordal category (b).

From Beethoven - Fifth Symphony

From Bruckner - Fifth Symphony

3 6:5 6:5

Fig. 3 (c) Chordal category (c).

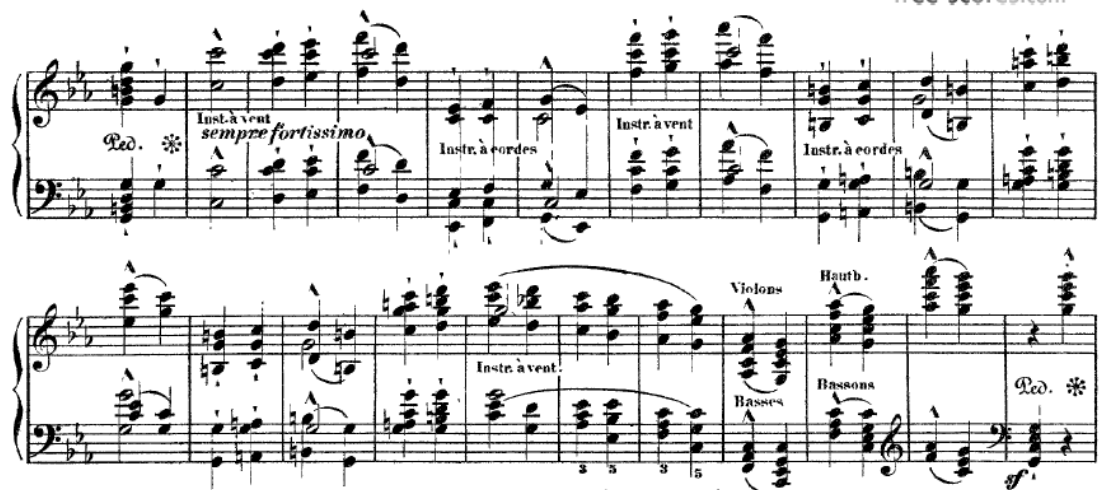


Fig. 3 (c'). Beethoven-Liszt, Symphony No. 5, from coda of first movement.

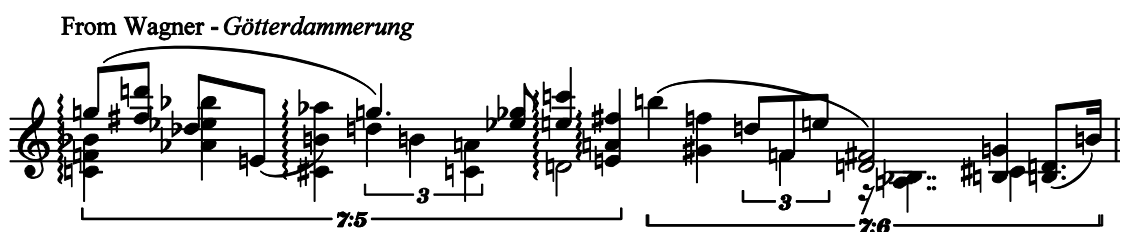


Fig. 3 (d) Chordal category (d).

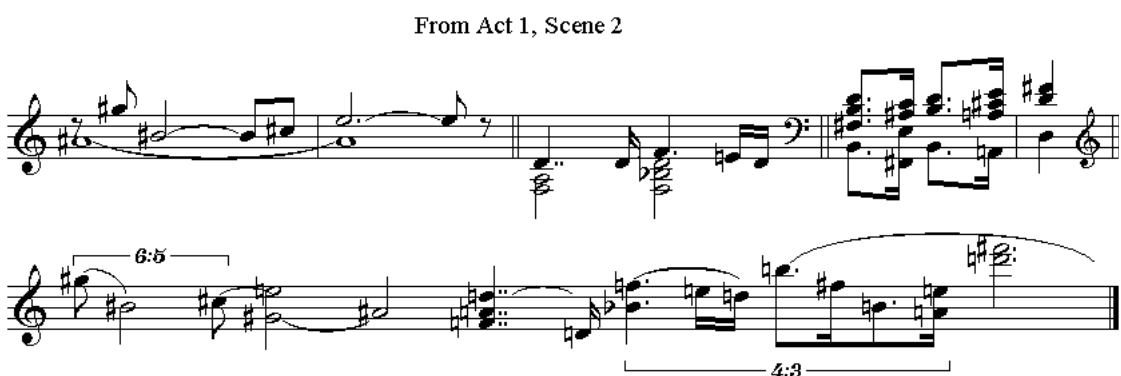


Fig. 3 (d'). Process of derivation from Wagner *Götterdämmerung*.

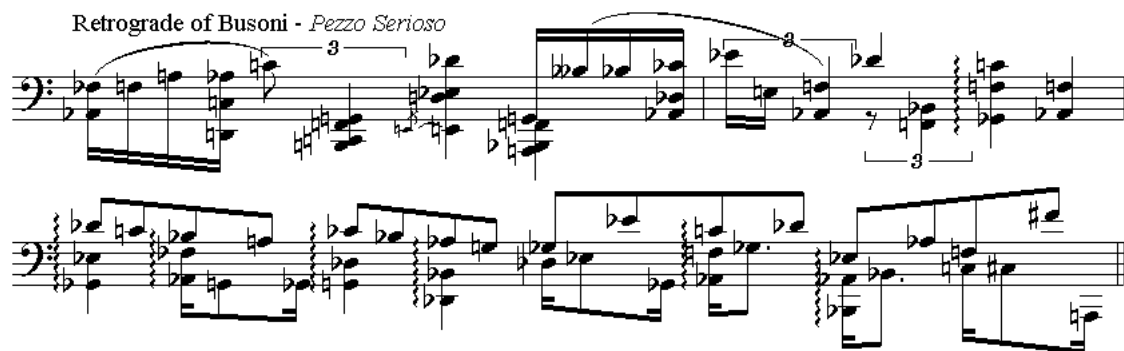


Fig. 3 (e). Chordal category (e).

This musical score is for a section titled 'Ancora più tranquillo.' from Busoni's 'Pezzo serioso'. It is written for a piano and features two staves. The key signature has three flats. The music is characterized by dense, complex chordal structures and intricate melodic lines. There are several triplets indicated by a '3' over a bracketed group of notes. The notation includes many accidentals and ties, suggesting a highly chromatic and technically demanding piece. The score includes performance instructions such as 'tenute, poco pesanti', 'molto armonioso non troppo piano', 'dolce espr.', 'm.s.', 'm.d.', 'sim.', 'dim.', 'Ancora più tranquillo.', 'morbido, armonioso, e senza inquietudine alcuna', 'Ancora più tranquillo.', 'dolce espr.', 'ten. p', 'poco marc.', and 'm.s.'. The score is numbered 47 at the beginning of each system. The publisher's name 'V. A. 2861.' is visible at the bottom right.

Fig. 3 (e'). From Busoni, *Pezzo serioso*.

The sixth sub-category (Fig. 3 (f)) consists of abstract chordal progressions derived randomly, in which one finds maximum objectivisation and defamiliarisation of tonal harmony; Fig. 3 (f) shows an example in which the hymn 'Rockingham' is given a series of harmonies and durations selected from gamuts of material derived from elsewhere, in order to produce this effect.



Fig. 3 (f). Chordal category (f). 'Rockingham' with random chords.

The final sub-category (Fig. 3 (g)) I call 'Compression'. Here all semblance of harmonic progression disappears and the music is rapid and often incoherent.²⁹ This type of material appears in most extended form near the end of *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*, in slightly briefer form near the end of *Etched Bright with Sunlight*, in either registrally limited or fragmented forms in *Eadweard Muybridge/Edvard Munch*, and more briefly in various other chapters.

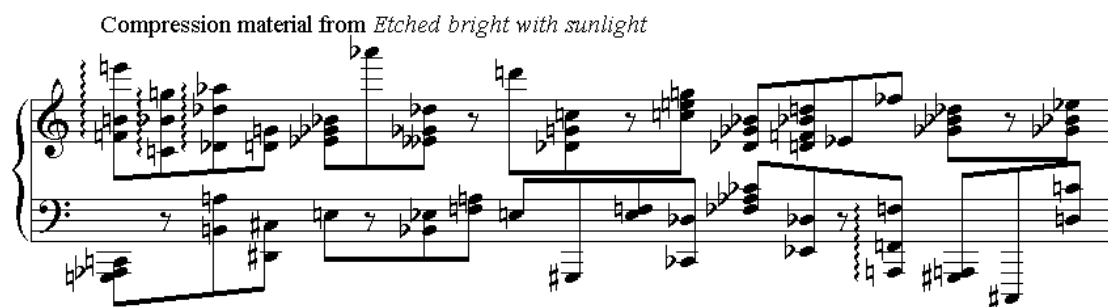


Fig. 3 (g) Chordal category (g).

These categories are approximations and some material could arguably belong in more than one. For example, the *Matthäus-Passion* material, at its first full appearance (in the *Poets*) is more chromatically coloured than on other occurrences; also categories (c) and (d) overlap to a degree. Nonetheless, in terms of the medium-range divisions of the whole work, I believe these categories are meaningful in terms of the aural experience.

The gestural category is much the smallest, and is headed by a key motif taken from the second act of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, specifically Hagen's utterance 'Der Ewigen Macht. – wer erbte sie?' ('Who will inherit the might of the immortals?') delivered to Alberich from his sleep in Act 2, Scene 1 of the opera (Fig. 4). This appears only a few times within the *History*, but at moments of huge structural and dramatic importance.

Related gestures include the opening motive from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (a clear allusion to Charles Ives, who famously cited the 'fate motive' at various points throughout his *Concord Sonata*, and also discovered and developed links between this

²⁹ The inspiration for this technique came both from Iannis Xenakis's piano work *Evryali* (1973), much of which is in the form of rapid-fire repeated chords, and Richard Barrett's *Tract* (1989-96), the last section of which employs a similar 'compression' strategy (itself inspired by a comparable passage in Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Mantra* (1970)). *Tract* was given its first complete London performance in a concert on May 1, 1997, by the author, at the British Music Information Centre, Stratford Place, London, in the same concert as the first complete performance of *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*.

motive and hymns by Charles Zeuner and Simeon B. Marsh),³⁰ a rhetorical gesture taken from Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*,³¹ recurrent rhythmic patterns in major or minor sixths, some of the Alkan material,³² certain abstract 'modernist' gestures (especially in the earlier part of the *Poets*), and a category I call 'pointillism', actually consisting not merely of single disembodied attacks – though there are many of them – but also of enmeshed, fragmented gestures reminiscent of certain serial music of the 1950s and 1960s; Finnissy had in mind in particular the music of Jean Barraqué.³³

Fig. 4. Wagner, *Götterdämmerung*, from Act 2, Scene 1.

The gestural material almost always takes the form of short phrases (see Fig. 5), often in the bass register. The key motif is nearly always alluded to with its text printed in the score, and – in the contexts in which it appears – it was intended to sound 'dramatic'

³⁰ See J. Peter Burkholder, *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 195-200, 351-355, and Geoffrey Block, *Ives: Concord Sonata* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 36-38.

³¹ This motif can be heard in the violas and cellos in bars 144-145 of the 'Scène d'amour' of the work.

³² I have not dealt with this material in detail in this chapter as its appearances are mostly concentrated in a few places, principally in *Alkan-Paganini* and at a few strategic moments in *Le réveil* and *Kapitalisch Realisme*.

³³ The music of Barraqué represents to Finnissy a movement within French music used to contrast as strongly as possible with the mid- to late-19th century French orientalism upon which he also draws in *Unsere Afrikareise*. The contrast is all the stronger because of the fact that this chapter includes some of the most unbroken linear material in the whole cycle.

in a quasi-literary manner (as the result of a controlling sensibility ‘from outside’ rather than in any sense emerging organically from preceding material).

Wagner allusion from *Etched bright with sunlight* Beethoven 5th allusion in *Kapitalistische Realisme*



(Der E - wi gen Macht) (wer erb - te sie?)

Berlioz rhetorical gesture in *My parents' generation* Repeated sixths in *Le démon de l'analogie*



My parents' generation

From Gregory Woods section in *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*



Abstract pointillism from *My parents' generation thought War meant something*



Fig. 5. Gestural material types.

The category of line is the largest, and is headed by another fundamental motive, derived from the ‘Scène d’amour’ from Berlioz’s *Roméo et Juliette* (Fig. 6), which appears very prominently in both the first and last chapters of the work (*Le démon de l’analogie* and *Etched Bright with Sunlight*, respectively).

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Fl. *1 solo* *espressivo*
p

Hb. *solo*
p *pp*

C.a. *solo* *espressivo*
p

Cl. (La) *1*
p *pp*

Vns. *con sord.*
p *pp* *ppp*

Altos *sf* *pp* *ppp*

Vlles *sf* *pp* *ppp*

Cb. *sf* *pp* *ppp*

252 *1*
p *1 solo*

Fig. 6. Berlioz, *Roméo et Juliette*, from 'Scène d'amour', 'Juliette' theme.

The diverse range of material in Fig. 7 (a) is diatonic, employing an extensive degree of stepwise motion, and with only moderate or no ornamentation. Several different examples employ a figure of a rising then falling step or half-step, or its inversion, a melodic archetype that can be found throughout the *History*, often in radically different contexts.

The second sub-category (Fig. 7 (b)) consists of material that is pentatonic or near-pentatonic. This links as disparate sources as folk music from Venda Africa, North Greenland, the Tutelo Native American tribes and Lincolnshire, all of the African-

American spirituals that feature so prominently in *North American Spirituals* and elsewhere, a chant-like melody derived from Bach's chorale *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* BWV 385, and even arguably the British First World War Song 'Pack up your troubles in your Old Kit Bag' (though this straddles sub-categories (a) and (b)). Amongst recurrent features in this category of material is the use of two or three repeated notes.

The third sub-category I call 'folkish European' (Fig. 7 (c)). Most of the material here demonstrates a degree of extravagant ornamentation or figuration that sets it somewhat apart from the preceding categories, though it is still mostly diatonic, albeit with a greater variety of modalities. This includes Norwegian hardanger fiddle music (as well as some of Grieg's works based upon it), various music originally played on or with the Sardinian triple clarinet called *launeddas*, consisting of three pipes, two of which are played with the right and left hands and the other of which acts as a drone, traditional Irish folk melodies, as well as some Basque folk melodies that are employed in the section representing Federico García Lorca in the *Poets*. Note here that the original Basque melody on its own would not really belong in this category, but Finnissy's mediated version is quite different; the same is true to a lesser extent of some of the *launeddas* music.

The fourth sub-category, which I call 'folkish extra-European' (Fig. 7 (d)), is the most complex. Here are to be found various non-diatonic modes, featuring in particular augmented intervals, that staple of nineteenth century composers wishing to represent the 'exotic',³⁴ as well as even more extensive ornamentation, sometimes quite angular in nature. Yet these properties often result as much from Finnissy's modifications of his sources as from the original sources themselves.³⁵ Cretan melodies,³⁶ quite apart from being fragmented and reassembled (a process which Finnissy applies to much of the other material as well) are subject to significant pitch modifications, as are some Ethiopian chants,³⁷ which are presented in a variety of modalities, sometimes those of particular forms of Arab and Berber music³⁸ (as well as being presented in configurations derived from the latter musics). Finnissy also employs some Tunisian melodies,³⁹ most prominently in *Etched Bright with Sunlight*, which feature quartertones, which obviously cannot be replicated on the piano; rather surprisingly, Finnissy simply rounds these off into diatonic patterns (though not necessarily the same modes as would result from simply

³⁴ For the best overall study of this phenomenon in general, see the various essays in Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998) and Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); see also Carl Dahlhaus, 'Exoticism, Folklorism, Archaism', in *Nineteenth Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 302-311; Peter W. Schatt, *Exotik in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Katzschler, 1986); Derek B. Scott, 'Orientalism and Musical Style' in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 82 No. 2 (Summer 1998), pp. 309-335.

³⁵ The very term 'original' is of course problematic in this course, in light of the various forms of mediation involved through collecting, notating and distributing folk music. For the purposes of this article, 'original' simply means in the printed or recorded form from which Finnissy first encountered them.

³⁶ These are associated with the section representing Konstantin Kavafis in *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*, and come from Samuel Baud-Bovy, *Chansons Populaires de Crète Occidentale* (Geneva: Edition Minkoff, 1972), pp. 99, 133.

³⁷ These come from Michael Powne, *Ethiopian Music: An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 131, 136, 138.

³⁸ The basic sources on Arab and Berber music that Finnissy employs are to be found in Alexis Chottin (ed), *Corpus de Musique Marocaine* (Casablanca: Librairie Livre Service, 1987), two volumes.

³⁹ From Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, *Mélodies Tunisiennes: hispano-arabes, arabo-berbères, juive, nègre* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937).

making the quarter-flats into simple flats), rather than finding some other means of paralleling this aspect of the music on the piano.⁴⁰ This sub-category of material (here once again I should stress that these sub-categories are my own rather than Finnissy's) also includes various material derived from Western composers of exoticist/orientalist works (including Rameau, Victor Massé, Félicien David, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Alan Bush, and others), employed in such a way (especially in *Unsere Afrikareise*) that the distinctions between the 'original' material (or rather, as filtered through both the (usually Western) ethnomusicologists who collected it, as well as through Finnissy himself) and that coming from Western appropriations/representations become blurred.

There are a few types of linear material which do not fit easily into any of these categories: these would include wild, leaping (but still diatonic) Paganini-derived material (which possibly could go into category (c), though it is very different from anything else to be found there), extremely quiet lines associated with Frank O'Hara and derived obliquely from the music of Morton Feldman, ragtime melodies, and an important motif derived from a sketch for a Second Piano Concerto by Grieg, which is present in various guises throughout the second section of *Muybridge-Munch*. In terms of the macro-categories, material derived from Debussy's *Berceuse heroïque*, used on various levels in *My parents' generation*, arguably straddles the lines and chords categories.

But notwithstanding these exceptions, the categories I provide encompass the majority of the material to be found in the cycle, and the sub-categories delineate what I believe to be audible medium-range connections between types of material often derived from many different sources. In the absence of long-range structural harmony in the *History* (which is not to say that small-scale harmony is not crucial to the work), I would suggest that the listener is most likely to perceive, at least on first hearings, the ways in which certain passages and expanses of material are characterised by chordal/gestural/linear bias, types of figuration (in terms of degree of ornamentation, angularity or otherwise of contour, and so on), overall harmonic 'colour' (as provided by different modalities), use of the instrument (variously hushed and still, wild and flamboyant, or various things in between), register (less of a factor in the *History* than in other Finnissy works, as mentioned earlier) and so on. My categories do not provide an exhaustive list – indeed, they do not incorporate all of the attributes I have just mentioned – but go some way towards providing a means of understanding how the structural delineations of material operate on a perceptual level.

⁴⁰ As for example in the para-microtonal writing in some of the *Verdi Transcriptions*, in which close-spaced trichords have varying inner intervallic relationships to parallel microtonal shifts. See Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 86-88.

Berlioz, 'Scène d'amour' from *Roméo et Juliette*



Imaginary Sicilian folk-melody, in *Sizilianische Männerakte*



'L'Aria della Madonna della Carmino', traditional Sicilian folksong collected by Meyerbeer



Stephen Foster, 'Beautiful Dreamer'



Arthur Sullivan, 'Whatever you are', from *Utopia Limited*



'Young Men Taken In and Done For', music-hall song, words and music by Henry King



'Ungersvenden', Norwegian mountain melody, as collected in the 19th century by L.M. Lindeman



La brabançonne, Belgian national anthem, by Alexander Dechet and François Van Campenhout, also used by Debuss
Berceuse héroïque



Beethoven, String Quartet Op. 18 No. 5. Third Movement, theme.



Fragments of imaginary popular music of the 1940s



Fig. 7 (a). Lines - category (a) – diatonic/stepwise⁴¹.

⁴¹ The sources for the lesser-known folk and popular materials in this list are as follows: 'L'Aria della Madonna della Carmino', from Giacomo Meyerbeer, *Sizilianische Volkslieder*, edited Fritz Bose

'Pack up your troubles in your Old Kit Bag', British First World War Song

Melody derived from Bach *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* BWV 385

'Betsy Walton', Lincolnshire folksong

'Potilo', Vendan African song

Inuit song from Thule region, North Greenland, recorded by Christian Lune in 1909

Fragments from music for two 'Spirit Adoption' ceremonies of the Tutelo Native American tribe

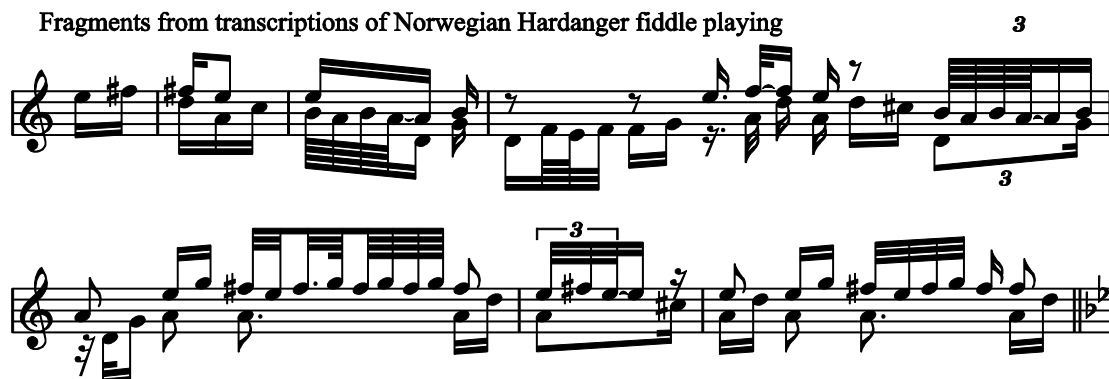
'Steal Away', African-American spiritual

Fig. 7 (b). Lines – category (b) - pentatonic/near pentatonic.⁴²

(Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1970), No. 14; 'Young Men Taken In and Done For', by Harry King, in Peter Davison, *Songs of the British Music Hall* (New York: Oak Publications, 1971); 'Ungensvenden' from Ludwig Mathias Lindeman, *Ældre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier*, reprint (Oslo: Norsk Musikforlag, 1983), No. 470.

⁴² The sources for the lesser-known materials here are: 'Betsy Walton' from Percy Grainger and Patrick O'Shaughnessy (eds), *21 Lincolnshire Folk Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); 'Potilo', from John Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs: A study in ethnomusicological analysis* (1967), reprinted (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 59; Inuit Song from Michael Hauser, *Traditional Greenlandic Music* (Copenhagen: Kragen/Acta Ethnomusicologica Danica 7, 1991), pp. 218-219; Tutelo music from Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, *Tutelo Rituals on Six Nations Reserve, Ontario* (Ann Arbor: Society for Ethnomusicology, 1981), pp.25-35.

Fragments from transcriptions of Norwegian Hardanger fiddle playing



'Dionigi Burranca', professional dance as played on the Sardinian *launeddas*



As modified by Finnissey



'Pass 'e tresi', from Giovanni Lai, 'Mediana a pipia'. *Launeddas* melody.



'Tspinellu a pipia Dionigi Burranca', Sardinian song accompanied by *launeddas*



'Zortziko Ezpatadantazaris Zumarraga', Basque song



Finnissey's version of part of the above



'Paidin Mhac Ruairidhe', traditional Irish folk melody

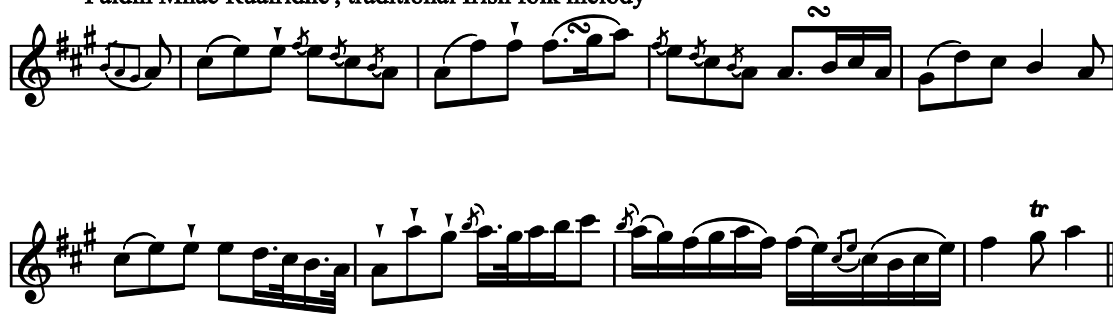
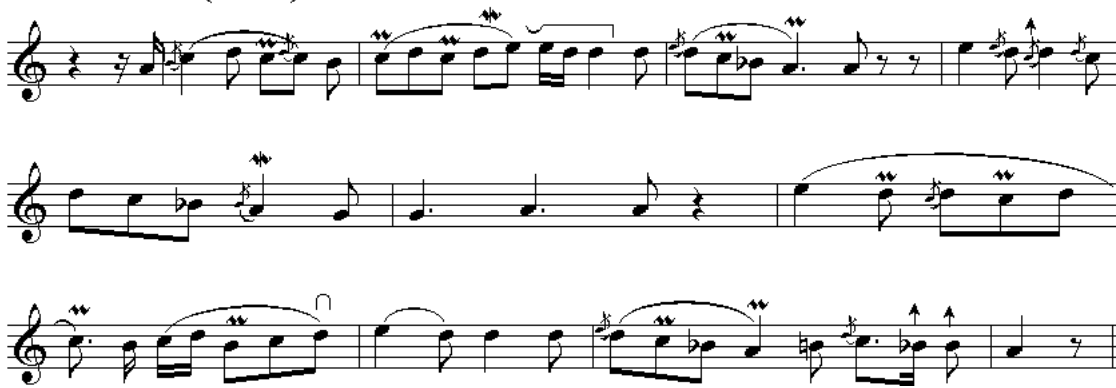


Fig. 7 (c). Lines – category (c) – folkish European.⁴³

Cretan melody, 'ΕΜΗΝΥΣΕ Μ' Ο ΣΥΝΤΕΚΝΟΣ'

Andante (♩. = 58)

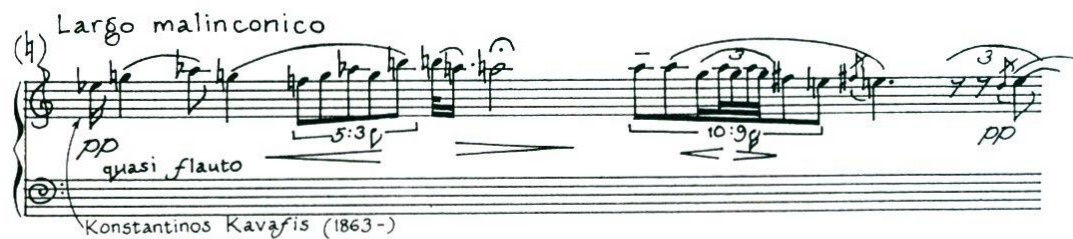


Cretan melody, 'ΚΟΣΜΕ ΧΡΥΣΕ, ΚΟΣΜ' ΑΡΙΓΥΡΕ'



Finnissy – derivations from Cretan melodies in *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*

⁴³ Here the sources are: Hardanger fiddle music from Morten Levy, *The World of the Gorrlaus Slåtts*, three volumes (Copenhagen: Acta Musicologica Danica No. 6, 1989), Vol. 3, p. 22; 'Dionigi Burranca' from Andreas Fridolin Weis Bentzon, *The Launeddas: A Sardinian Folk Music Instrument* (Copenhagen, Acta Ethnomusicologica Danica, 1969), pp. 37-38; 'Pass' e tresi' ibid. p. 21; 'Ispinellu a pipia Dionigi Burranca' ibid. p. 108; 'Zortziko Ezpatadantazaris Zumarraga' from J.A Donostia, *Cancionero vasco* (Madrid: Unión Música Española, 1944), p. 1797; 'Paidin Mhac Ruairidhe' from Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland: Arranged for the Pianoforte* (1840) (Dublin: Walton's, 1969), Vol. 3, p. 46.



'Kavafis' section from *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*.

'Villoteau', Ethiopian ecclesiastical chant, music for Good Friday



Ethiopian chant from Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa



Finnissy's free retrograde of middle sections



Further Ethiopian ecclesiastical chant phrases



Finnissy – configuration of Ethiopian melodies in the style of North African music

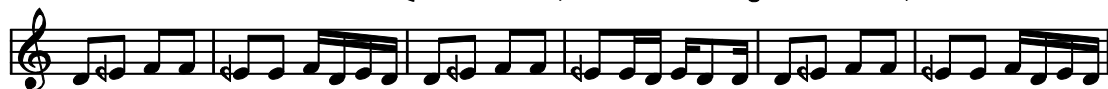


From *Unsere Afrikareise*.

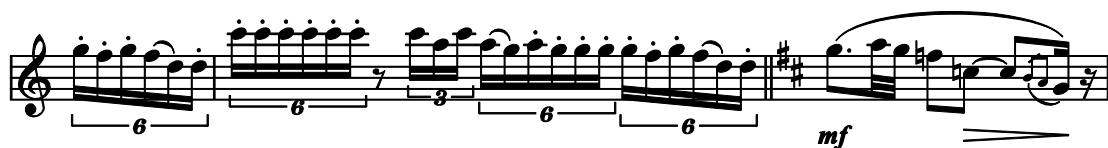
'Chanson de la Tribu des Jlass', Arab-Berber song from Tunisia, Kairouan region



'Chanson du Saint Sidi Abdul-Qader Al-Jilali', Arab-Berber song from Tunisia, in troubadour tradi



Alan Bush, *African Sketches* for flute and piano, fragments



Félicien David, 'Chant du muezzin' from *Le Désert*



Fig. 7 (d). Lines - category (d) – folkish extra-European.

The eleven chapters of the *History* each exhibit particular emphases in terms of the three major macro-categories, whilst the individual sections of the central piece, *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*, also contains its own inner structure in this sense. These are shown in Fig. 8.

1. *Le démon de l'analogie*– lines.
2. *Le réveil de intraitable réalité* – gestures.
3. *North American Spirituals* – chords/lines.
4. *My parents' generation thought War meant something* - chords/lines.
5. *Alkan-Paganini* – lines.
6. *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets* – everything (but see inner structure below).
7. *Eadweard Muybridge - Edvard Munch* – Muybridge – gestures, Munch – line. Chords at end.
8. *Kapitalistisch Realisme (mit Sizilianische Männerakte und Bachsche Nachdichtungen)* – KR chords, BN chords, SM chords/lines.
9. *Wachtend op de volgende uitsbaring van repressie en censuur* – gestures.
10. *Unsere Afrikareise* – lines.
11. *Etched Bright with Sunlight* – everything.

Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets

1. Gregory Woods: Gesture.
2. Mutsuo Takahashi: Gesture → Line.
3. Thom Gunn: Line.
4. Allen Ginsberg: Gesture.
5. Frank O'Hara: Line/Chords.
6. Harold Norse: Line/Chords.
7. Pier Paolo Pasolini: Line.
8. James Kirkup: Chords.
9. Jean Genet: Line.
10. Stephen Spender: Gesture → Line.
- Melange 1: All three types.
- Melange 2: Beginning with all types, leading to Lines/Chords.
11. Federico García Lorca: Line.
12. Ralph Chubb: Line.
13. Jean Cocteau: Line (with hints of Gesture).
- Transition: Chords.
14. Konstantin Kavafis: Line.
15. Oscar Wilde: Line/Chords.
16. Edward Carpenter: Line/Chords.
17. John Addington Symonds: Line/Chords.
- Compression: Chords.
- Coda: Line/Chords.

Fig. 8. Predominance of macro-categories in the different chapters of the *History*.

In terms of the sub-categories, one can find a plethora of all types in *Le réveil*, the *Poets*, and *Etched*. In the first of these, the music shifts continually between short fragments delineated by crescendos from and diminuendos into *niente*, to produce a 'zoom in/zoom out' effect; in the second each of the relatively short sections exhibits a clear predominance of one or other sub-category (or pairs of them combined simultaneously); in the third the same process applies across sections of medium length. Some of *Le démon* lies somewhere between *Le réveil* and *Etched* in terms of diversity of categories, but with longer expansions of 'walking lines' in regular crotchets, and some more extended use of chordal categories (c) and (d) towards the conclusion; an interaction between these two categories informs most of the first section of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* is dominated by chordal category (a), whilst *Sizilianische Männerakte* consists totally of an interplay between chordal category (e) and linear categories (a) and (c). *Unsere Afrikareise*, on the other hand, is in very large measure about a dialogue between linear categories (b) and (d), with the boundaries between the two occasionally becoming confused.

Musical 'description' is a questionable art; reducing music to a descriptive account can be seen as a way of attempting to force certain interpretations or otherwise intrusively 'direct' the listening experience. Nonetheless, in a work of this scale and complexity, I believe it can be useful, especially for listeners relatively unfamiliar with Finnissy's idiom and work from this period of composition, to have some pointers to facilitate focus. Whilst my own descriptions are certainly informed by sketch study and a good deal of interaction with the composer, they should not in any sense be viewed as definitive; it is perfectly possible, and wholly valid, for a listener to determine for themselves quite different structural boundaries, motivic relationships, allusions, and so on (not to mention different contextual interpretations). I simply hope that what follows will be of some use. Where there are major source materials not presented above, I will include these as musical examples at the place where they appear most prominently.



Chapter 1: *Le démon de l'analogie*

The title of *Le démon de l'analogie* is taken from a passage in Roland Barthes' 1975 book *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*.

Saussure's *bête noire* was the arbitrary (nature of the sign). His is analogy. The 'analogical' arts (cinema, photography), the 'analogical' methods (academic criticism) are discredited. Why? Because analogy implies an effect of Nature: it constitutes the 'natural' as a source of truth; and what adds to the curse of analogy is the fact that it is irrepressible: no sooner is a form seen than it must resemble something: humanity seems doomed to Analogy, i.e. in the long run, to Nature. Whence the effort of painters, of writers, to escape it. How? By two contrary excesses, or call them two ironies which flout Analogy, either by feigning a spectacularly flat respect (this is the Copy, which is rescued), or by regularly - according to the regulations - distorting the imitated object (this is Anamorphosis).

Aside from these transgressions, what stands in beneficent opposition to perfidious Analogy is simple structural correspondence: Homology, which reduces the recall of the first object to a proportional allusion (etymologically, i.e., in the Edenic state of language, analogy used to mean proportion).⁴⁴

In this chapter, Finnissy almost parodistically enacts Barthes' 'spectacularly flat respect' *as well as* 'distorting the imitated object', this being each fragment of the musical material that is 'photographed' in the piece. The distortion *is* the flattening of the materials of this piece, a distanced survey of the 'terrain' to come, like an extended cinematic tracking shot (as found, for example, at the opening of Orson Welles' film *Touch of Evil* (1958) or Sidney Lumet's *The Hill* (1965)).

For a 29-minute opening to a five-and-a-half hour piano work, Finnissy's first chapter is surprisingly short on spectacular (in the more usual sense of the word) moments, as might produce an arresting effect; such moments, where they do occur, are brief and fragmentary, small windows onto what may come later. Rather, after a misleading opening (almost a 'false start'), the piece traverses slowly through its material, most of the time with a steady plodding beat, sustaining attention by means of the intensity that is produced by the concentrated sense of distance and reserve. However, at the same time Finnissy introduces many of the most important categories of material to be developed further later in the cycle. Primary amongst these is the *motivo fondamentale*, both as the plainchant *Te Deum Laudamus* and in Bach's *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 328, to which Finnissy applies various techniques (as he will in myriad different ways later in the cycle). This is used to generate a range of what I will call 'walking' material, mostly in regular crotchets, which is used to connect different passages, in the manner of a 'Promenade' (as in Mussorgsky's *Tableaux d'une exposition*).

⁴⁴ Roland Barthes, part of 'Le démon de l'analogie' from *Barthes on Barthes*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Noonday Press, 1989), p. 44. Barthes' ideas here were prefigured in his writings on criticism in his earlier *Critique et vérité* (1966), in which he wrote that 'The critic separates meanings, he causes a second language – that is to say, a coherence of signs – to float above the first language of the work. In brief, we are concerned with a kind of anamorphosis, give of course that on the one hand the work never lends itself to a pure reflection (it is not a specular object like an apple or a box), and on the other hand that the anamorphosis itself is a *guided* transformation, subject to optical constraints: out of what it reflects, it must transform *everything*; transform only according to certain laws; transform always in the same direction'. See Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth*, translated and edited by Katrine Pilcher Keuneneman, with foreword by Philip Thody (New York and London; Continuum, 2007), p. 32.

The structure of the chapter can be perceived in terms of five sections, as follows:

A: *Flatness*. Following a few short fragments and anticipation of the 'compression' material, this section is centered around four passages of canonic writing drawing upon the *motivo fondamentale*, interspersed by the rhythmic motive in sixths (the fourth type of gestural material presented in Fig. 5), a combination of the Bach material with some of that later to be found in *Alkan-Paganini* within a wider segment of the 'compression' material, as an anticipation of later virtuosity, and the rhythmic material again. Via flash-forwards to a rhapsody around the spiritual 'Steal Away' and Arthur Sullivan's 'Whatever you are', Finnissy is able to ease into the walking material as a transition into the next section.

B: *Walking/Motion*. Here Finnissy morphs from the walking material into two other derivations (both used later more extensively in *My parents' generation*) exhibiting 'marching' qualities, specifically inverted or retrograded passages from Debussy's *Berceuses héroïque* and Sullivan's 'Onward Christian Soldiers' (Fig. 9). He fragments and thins out a derivative walking material (in a triadic form) to bring about the transition into the next section.

C: *Central Section*. This contains five sub-sections:

C (i): The *motivo fondamentale* in a clear form for the first time, but in a manner which parodies another highly extended piano work, Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji's *Opus Clavicembalisticum* (1929-30), specifically imitating the writing of the 'Fuga I' in the latter work (beginning with a low sustained line, then continuing in two-part counterpoint). But Finnissy cuts this material short in order to return to the 'walking/triadic' material, emphasising his distance from Sorabji's sprawling creations.

C (ii): short passages deriving from *Alkan-Paganini* (here Finnissy comes closest in the cycle to a clear allusion to Mozart's 'Fin ch'han dal vino', as set in Alkan's *Jean qui rit*), *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, leading back into the walking material, with a short flash-forward towards a Billings hymn, which includes the first proper cadence of the piece, after which the music dissolves into a short montage of fragments.

C (iii): The first 'Sicilian/Sardinian' passage, in which energetic *launeddas* music is combined with hymn-derived material, then a semi-'compression' interlude from *Kapitalistische Realisme*.

C (iv): A longer passage of washed-out derivatives from imaginary 1940s popular music, looking forward to *My parents' generation*.

C (v): A longer 'Sicilian/Sardinian' section, incorporating both imaginary folk music from these regions with derivatives from Busoni and Beethoven, as in *Kapitalistisch Realisme/Sizilianische Männerakte*. Once again dissolving into a short montage of fragments.

Debussy - *Berceuse Héroïque*

Inversion with octave displacement and doublings

From Sullivan - 'Onward Christian Soldiers'

Retrograde with shift up a half-step mid-way

Debussy - central section (La Brabançonne) from *Berceuse Héroïque*

Derivations - various pitch and octave modifications

Fig. 9. Derivations from Debussy *Berceuse Héroïque* and Sullivan 'Onward Christian Soldiers'

D: *Melodies*. Two clear melodies, first the iconic and clearly-stated melody from Berlioz's 'Scène d'amour' from *Roméo et Juliette* (harmonised in an extremely fluid and slippery manner, in contrast to Berlioz), then from the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 10 no. 1, using the pitch content of the *motivo fondamentale* in place of the original melody; both accompanied by Bach derivations or block chords. Then a forlorn, desolate derivation from a combination of Beethoven, Wagner and Bruckner (see Fig. 10), as to be found in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, leading ultimately back to the walking material.

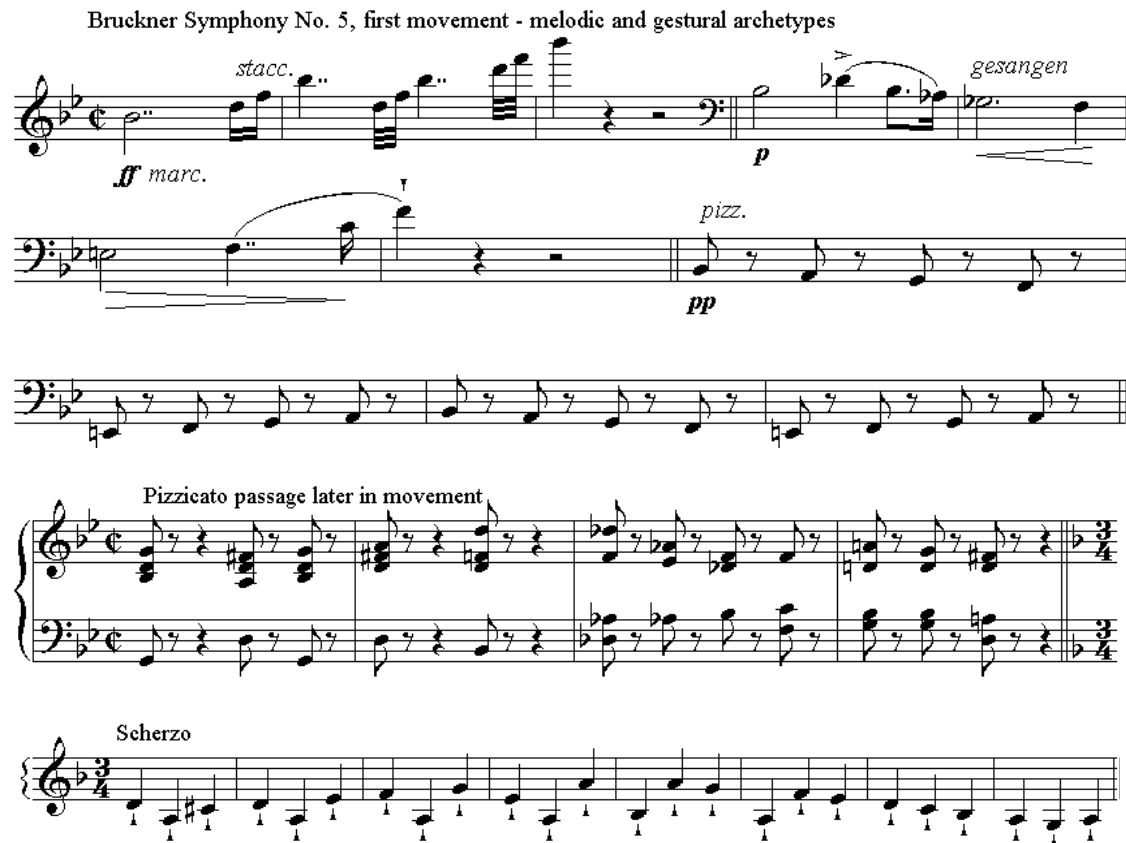


Fig. 10. Some archetypes in Bruckner Symphony No. 5.

E: *Coda – Walking/March*. Further dialogues between the walking material and the Beethoven/Bruckner material, intercut with flash-forwards to impassioned renditions of spirituals and hymns. All ultimately descending into a combination of the *motivo fondamentale* with more of the walking/march material from the *Berceuse héroïque*, before disappearing into nothingness.

One of the most difficult chapters to interpret coherently if played in isolation from the rest of the cycle, *Le démon* is nonetheless structurally essential both in terms of laying the ‘seeds’ for various materials which flower gradually through the course of the longer work (here in palpably incomplete forms, this pointing towards some later form of closure), and also as a counterpart to the final chapter, *Etched bright with sunlight*, in which similar strategies are employed in a drastically accelerated context. Like all the chapters of the *History*, *Le démon* makes use of an extraordinarily subtle and intricate dialogue between differently characterised types of music. And the properties it exploits are themselves the product of history (musical and otherwise), but history as seen to be meaningful from the vantage point of the present, not just a collection of relics, or ‘Copies’ in Barthes’ sense of the term. The high degree of individuation of each category of material in the piece inevitably suggests an allusion or analogy to a listener with any degree of musical literacy, but rarely in a ‘natural’ sense (even with the Berlioz quotation, because of its harmonic configuration). On the contrary, *Le démon* is most markedly ‘unnatural’ in many respects, forever withholding comfort for the listener such as can be provided by recourse to the familiar. Much of the material is ‘colour-drained’ either through sparseness, repetitiveness, or simple harmonic saturation, or mediated to such a

degree that it takes on a radically different form. These forms of treatment do roughly correspond to Barthes' 'ironies which flout Analogy', in ways that create an impression of rarefaction or developmental potential respectively. The former quality is much more in abundance than the latter, which is why the piece as a whole seems distant and possibly uninviting (a very brave strategy for beginning a cycle of this length). The musical 'monuments' presented are ultimately as monolithically forbidding as they are enticing. But the extensive and intricate use of correspondences between materials (akin to Barthes's 'Homology') makes the piece very much more than a simple array of objects.

Chapter 2: *Le réveil de l'intratable réalité*

Like *Le démon*, *Le réveil de l'intratable réalité* also takes its title from Barthes, this time from his reflection on photography, *Camera Lucida*:

What characterizes the so-called advanced societies is that they today consume images and no longer, like those of the past, beliefs; they are therefore more liberal, less fanatical, but also more 'false' (less 'authentic') - something we translate, in ordinary consciousness, by the avowal of an impression of nauseated boredom, as if the universalized image were producing a world that is without difference (indifferent), from which can rise, here and there, only the cry of anarchisms, marginalisms, and individualisms: let us abolish the images, let us save immediate Desire (desire without mediation).

Mad or tame? Photography can be one or the other: tame if its realism remains relative, tempered by aesthetic or empirical habits (to leaf through a magazine at the hairdresser's, the dentist's); mad if this realism is absolute and, so to speak, original, obliging the loving and terrified consciousness to return to the very letter of Time: a strictly revulsive movement which reverses the course of the thing, and which I shall call, in conclusion, the photographic ecstasy.

Such are the two ways of the Photography. The choice is mine: to subject its spectacle to the civilized code of perfect illusions, or to confront in it the wakening of intractable reality.⁴⁵

The dissolution of the music into a montage of short fragments in sections C (ii) and (v) of *Le démon* provided an anticipation of the first half of *Le réveil*. This latter chapter also surveys a wide cross-section of musical materials, but where the musical 'photographs' in *Le démon* were relatively clear if somewhat aridly presented, in this piece they are very far from being subjected to the 'civilised code of perfect illusions' in the manner that Barthes describes above. Rather, Finnissy places his fragments almost always somewhat out of focus, half-formed, 'latent' rather than 'present', the music hinting at something to come without ever fully revealing what that thing is to be. As such, it is charged with a sense of potency and imminence which stands in great contrast to the static and aloof world of *Le démon*.

As originally planned, *Le réveil* was to be called *Canada: From its origins to the present day*, entailing a large-scale engagement with a variety of music associated with the history of Canada, including a range of French-Canadian folksongs, Jongleur melodies, Métis folksongs, both Inuit and other Native American melodies from the area that is now Canada, as well as the collection called *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*. In the end, much of this material was discarded, perhaps because the resulting work may have sounded too similar to *North American Spirituals*. A Métis and Native American melody appear in

⁴⁵ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 118-119.

heavily mediated form at the end of the *Spirituals*; otherwise Finnissy used only the *Livre* and the Inuit melodies, both of which are sufficiently distinctive, even in their mediated form, as to be able to be considered some of the defining attributes of this chapter.

The structure of *Le réveil* is more straightforward than that of *Le démon*, essentially falling into two large sections:

A: A cut-up of a diverse range of fragments from throughout the cycle, all ‘zooming’ in and out from *niente*, with gradually increasing dynamic peaks. Within this, a fragmentary thread provided by the combination of Bach and Billings material. All culminating in explosive combination of ‘Compression’ material and similar (but more irregular) writing associated with Mutsuo Takahashi in the *Poets*.

B: In four sub-sections:

B1: Dialogue between various material drawn from the *Poets* (O’Hara, Cocteau, Genet), *Muybridge-Munch* and *Unsere Afrikareise*.

B2: ‘Fragments pulvérisées’ from *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*.

B3: Retrograded bass line from *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*, combined with Cocteau material from *Poets*.

B4: Inuit folk songs from Greenland combined with bass-line derived from Schoenberg ‘Menuett’ from *Suite für Klavier*. Interspersed with further fragments from *Unsere Afrikareise*, culminating in brief allusion to hardanger fiddle music from *Muybridge-Munch*.

Section A draws upon a gamut of 100 fragments of varying length taken mostly from passages elsewhere in the cycle also frequently presented in inverted, retrograded or retrograde inverted forms. Also included within the gamut are a few fragments specific to this chapter, taken from the *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal* (Fig. 11)⁴⁶ and a selection of Inuit⁴⁷ folksongs from the Thule region of North Greenland (Fig. 12). In both cases, many of the essential attributes of the originals are maintained: slightly pedantic stepwise contrapuntal motion in the *Livre d’Orgue*, three or four pitch restriction with numerous repeated notes in the Inuit melodies.

⁴⁶ *Livre d’Orgue de Montréal*. See also

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=U1ARTU0002092>

(accessed 21/8/13). The *Livre* was a seventeenth-century manuscript which was rediscovered by Élisabeth Gallat-Morin in 1978. Brought to Montréal from France in 1724 (see Volume 1, p. xi), it contains 540 pages of liturgical organ music, with no page numbers or table of contents, nor any composer’s name. Two former owners can be identified – Jean-Joseph Girouard, notary and political figure (who signed it in 1847); Jean Girard, young Sulpician cleric, organist and school master, signed it in 1724 (the year he arrived) – over an inscription which has been scraped off, possibly that of a former owner (ibid). 16 pieces have been identified as being by Nicolas Lebégue (1630-1792), the King’s organist, but the rest remains anonymous (ibid. See the introduction to volume 1 for more on the history and attributes of the work). The work is regarded as very representative of French organ music at the end of the seventeenth-century and beginning of the eighteenth. At this time, the previously dominant contrapuntal style from the tradition of Jehan Titelouze was gradually abandoned and plainchant became used only in certain liturgical verses.

⁴⁷ There remains debate on the appropriateness of the terms ‘Eskimo’ and ‘Inuit’ for the people of this region (to do with differentiation of people from other regions also called Inuit). For the purposes of this chapter, I will use ‘Inuit’, in light of the fact that ‘Eskimo’ is a colonial word.

From No. 46
'Fugue (en Dialogue)'

From No. 31
'Duo'

Without ornamentation
Slightly compressed

From No. 1
'Prelude'

31.

32.

Compressed

33.

6:5

3

Retrograde inversion (RI) of 33

RI of 32 (pre-compression)

RI of 31

38.

39.

40.

6:5

Fig. 11. Fragments from *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*.⁴⁸

Part of Song No. 46 from
Michael Hauser - *Traditional Greenlandic Music* (c' = ca. B)

Modified version

3

9:8

Further rhythmic modification
and transposition

Part of Song No. 55 (c' = ca. d'-d#)

34.

6:5

Modified version

35.

7:5

3

9:8

Retrograde inversion of 35

Retrograde inversion of 34 (first modification)

36.

37.

Fig. 12. Fragments derived from Inuit folksongs, Thule region, North Greenland.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Livre d'Orgue* Volume 1, pp. 78-79 for the 'Fuge [en Dialogue], pp. 50-51 for the 'Duo' and pp. 2-3 for the 'Prélude'.

Finnissy also creates some new material through a combination of derivations from Tunisian folk songs (material which he calls 'L'Orientalisme' and will appear in full in *Etched*) and from a heavily elaborated form of the *Te Deum* (often in three parts). Furthermore, he derives new material from the setting of the *Te Deum* in Bach's organ chorale BWV 725 (Fig 13), creating a counterpoint between a derivation from the top two parts of the opening and an inversion of the same, the latter presented in a varying pulse that creates various polyrhythmic relationships with the former, and then extended more freely.



Fig. 13. Bach organ chorale *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 725.

The gamut itself can fairly be organised into a smaller number of large-scale categories of material:

- A: Chordal progressions (from Bach, Billings and elsewhere)
- B: Orderly contrapuntal lines, keyboard idioms ('Tutelo/'Hindoostanie' derivations (see below), *Livre d'Orgue*)
- C: Monophonic folk music (Inuit).
- D: 1940s popular music.
- E: Unmeasured music: Grace note interjections, pointillistic gestures.
- F: Combinations of chordal and linear/gestural writing (L'Orientalisme/Te Deum, *Alkan-Paganini*, 'Anger' from the *Spirituals*, final section of *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, material from *Etched*).

It is essentially the interplay between such material types that creates the sense of an overall structure, rather than any long-range harmonic plan.

⁴⁹ See Hauser, *Traditional Greenlandic Music*, pp. 234-235 and 248-249. The text for Song 46 would translate as 'I cannot bear these stupid Danes, Who are so stupid that they are not able to speak!', in reference to 'collectors who do not master the Polar Eskimo dialect'.

Finnissy assembles these fragments into a series of thirty-six phrases of varying lengths, all presented in a 'zoom in/zoom out' fashion by hairpin dynamics from and back to *niente*. The dynamic highpoint of each phrase begins consistently at *mp*, rises to *mf* at one point, then later to *f*, before sinking back downwards again. This device has obvious cinematic connotations, whereby the material, like a filmed image, comes only into momentary and partial focus, but can also be found in some of the piano and other music of Salvatore Sciarrino, for example the Piano Sonata No. 1 (1976) (a work with which Finnissy is well-familiar). Above all, it serves to counteract other rhetorical connotations within the phrases, dynamics thus being imposed externally upon the material to create a type of objectifying effect. At the outset there are silences between phrases, then in the central section they run continuously, with the reintroduction of silences towards the end through the increasing use of pointillistic material. Finnissy seems to have chosen the order of fragments consciously rather than randomly, and they form themselves into larger-scale regions of activity. I delineate six regions,⁵⁰ the first a highly fragmentary introduction, then a 'Bach region', a central section dominated by dense writing combining chords and lines/gestures, intercut with other chordal/contrapuntal progressions, a section in which the material becomes more fragmentary, a section in which some degree of continuity is reconsolidated, and a final section where the material falls away into pointillism.

There are also various distinctive interrelationships to be found through the interplay of localised details, as from the very beginning of the work. In the very first phrase, featuring the Berlioz rhetorical gesture (see Fig. 5), the initial focus of attention is upon the treble part, the bass providing a type of growling accompaniment. Finnissy's configuration to some extent causes a fragment from Billings' 'Sing Praises to the Lord' fragment (see Fig. 3(b)) to act as an answering phrase to a melodic component of the Berlioz (after the opening archetypal gesture). However, the dynamic envelope peaks *before* the change of material, which occurs when the diminuendo is underway (a detail very important for performers to observe). This has a defamiliarising effect upon the whole gesture, as the dynamics are out of phase with the contours of the melody. The phrase ends on a near resolution; the following four phrases all end on either near-resolutions or implied resolutions. Thus Finnissy maintains the sense that overall phrases are 'cut short' somewhat, or made blurred before reaching their destination, heightening the sense of imminency. This process becomes more diffuse in succeeding phrases, though remains a factor throughout, Finnissy taking care not to let the dynamic low points coincide with resolutions when the phrases cease to be separated. Sometimes the ends of phrases links to the beginnings of the next ones in terms of register or levels of density and overlap between parts, whilst Finnissy also exploits the similarities between fragments which feature regular semiquavers in *moto perpetuo* like figurations (thus joining a passage from the *Spirituals* with another from *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*).

Section B1 is likely to be one of the most enigmatic and disorienting to a listener hearing the cycle for the first time, consisting as it does of highly distinctive and contrasting material types which all appear only briefly, yet without the type of configuration that is itself foregrounded, and provides dramatic momentum, in Section A. So as to create a hushed contrast with the violence of the end of the preceding section, a clear choice is the mysterious and very quiet music that appears in full in the Frank

⁵⁰ The delineation of regions here is my own interpretation of the work, rather than anything discerned from the sketches.

O'Hara section of the *Poets*, which Finnissy eases into the repeated sixths and archetypal rhythm from *Muybridge-Munch* (Fig. 5). But he cuts into this with a flurry of activity from the Cocteau material (the right hand derived from music of Satie, Milhaud and others associated with Cocteau, the left hand from Alkan), also in the *Poets*, which sets it up for its further appearance in Section B3.

But what follows is stranger still, pointing forward a long way in the cycle towards *Unsere Afrikareise*. Here we have the first appearance of ragtime (very clearly so), but combined with a plodding bass-line derived from Schubert Ecossaises (these will be combined with Venda African melodies in *Unsere Afrikareise*). The contrast between this and the expected quaver bass line of genuine ragtime serves to defamiliarise the ragtime from the very outset. When the bass turns to become quavers at the end of this material, despite coming from an Ecossaise rather than ragtime itself, it has the effect of 'bringing the material into line' more (though still in an atonal context). After the interruption of the *Muybridge-Munch* rhythms again, Finnissy brings an actual passage from *Unsere Afrikareise*, which then sounds like a type of large-scale 'answering phrase' to the ragtime passage, through the continuity of the bass line. As in Section A, Finnissy creates new interrelationships between material sourced from distinct places. The remainder of the section runs through the process again in compressed form.

For section B2, Finnissy employs the most extensive use of material derived from the *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*,⁵¹ albeit in thoroughly unrecognisable form, though sounding unlike anything else in the cycle (Fig. 14). What of the original source remains in this massively modified version? Certainly not the gently walking rhythms, imitative counterpoint or neat (or possibly pedantic) harmonic progressions. The harmony of the material that Finnissy produces is continuously in flux, lacking any sense of direction when taken in combination. However, there remains a sense of disembodied voice leading and stepwise counterpoint, and a relative degree of tonal stability if the parts are perceived separately. These musical aspects and the fluidity they cause serve to sharply distinguish the passage from the angular Cocteau and ragtime material in Section B2. The shifts between two and three-part writing are obvious in an aural sense; also the introduction of extravagant spread chords in the latter makes for a further distinction. Finnissy's indication of *senza espressione* reinscribes a certain pedantic or academic quality to the music, perhaps as an attempt to make these 'pulverised fragments' sound once again like he perceives the source.

⁵¹ *Livre*, vol. 1, pp. 50-51, 2-3, 78-79.

Duo

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled 'Duo' from the 'Livre d'Orgue de Montréal, No. 31'. The score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass, and is divided into six systems. The first system (measures 1-5) shows a simple harmonic progression. The second system (measures 6-10) introduces a more complex texture with a melodic line in the Treble staff and a supporting bass line. The third system (measures 11-14) features a prominent melodic line in the Treble staff with a trill in measure 11, and a rhythmic pattern in the Bass staff. The fourth system (measures 15-19) continues the melodic development in the Treble staff, with a trill in measure 15, and a supporting bass line. The fifth system (measures 20-23) shows a more complex texture with a melodic line in the Treble staff and a supporting bass line. The sixth system (measures 24-27) concludes the piece with a final melodic line in the Treble staff and a supporting bass line. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with notes, rests, and other musical symbols clearly visible.

Fig. 14 (a). *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, No. 31, 'Duo'.

Bar 40 (a) Retrograde inversion (RI) Bar 40 (b) RI Bar 40 (c) - 41 (a) RI Bar 41 (b)

RI etc.

etc.

Fig. 14 (b). Fragments from 'Duo', *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, with compressed retrograde inversions.

(irregular bar)

Fig. 14 (c). Retrograde of 'Duo', *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*, bars 64-75, with 3:4 rhythmic ratio between left hand and right hand, and other pitch/rhythmic modifications.



Fig. 14 (d). *Le réveil de l'intraitable réalité* – 'Fragments pulverisées' from *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*. The left hand is transposed down by a major or minor third from Fig. 14 (b), whilst the right hand of Fig. 14 (c) is transposed down by a major sixth, with a third part added. All of this serves to heighten the sense of bitonality.

For section B3, Finnissy combines aspects of B1 and B2, drawing further upon other material in the *Livre*; the bass line from the 'Prélude', from which he takes retrogrades of different fragments as well as a freer traversal of the same material and some of the alto line, in order to create a *cantus firmus*, which he combines with angular staccato material associated with Cocteau. Then in the final section, B4, Finnissy now brings in the clearest use of folk song yet in this piece, specifically Inuit melodies (Fig. 15). Four of the five melodies he uses come from the Thule region of North Greenland,⁵² and are collected in Michael Hauser's book on Greenlandic music mentioned earlier in the chapter.⁵³ Almost all Inuit music from Greenland uses a pentatonic scale,⁵⁴ including all of

⁵² In this region and also East Greenland, according to Poul Rovsing Olsen, traditional music still survives (or at least did at the time of his article). See Olsen, 'Intervals and Rhythm in the Music of the Eskimos of East Greenland' in Peter Crossley-Holland, *Proceedings of the Centennial Workshop on Ethnomusicology* (Vancouver: Center for Continuing Education, 1970), p. 54.

⁵³ In the order of appearance in Finnissy's work, the songs used are Nos. 40 (Hauser, *Traditional Greenland Music*, pp. 218-219), 50 (pp. 241-242), 19 (pp. 95-97, from South Greenland), 43 (pp. 223-224) and 45 (pp. 232-233).

the examples here. The first to appear (No. 40 in Hauser's collection⁵⁵ – Finnissy's selection was chosen randomly, but then the order was chosen on an intuitive basis, almost certainly so as to begin with that melody which opens with the same intervals as the *Te Deum*) is one in what Hauser calls the 'Complex Balanced Tripartite Form Type'. Finnissy takes the opening phrase and introduces tuplet patterns to make the pulse more fluid than in the original. Then he uses a composite pattern derived from the 'Group' and the 'Terminal musical phrase' to form an answering phrase, then returning to the 'Group' again but modifying the ending to preclude a resolution onto C.

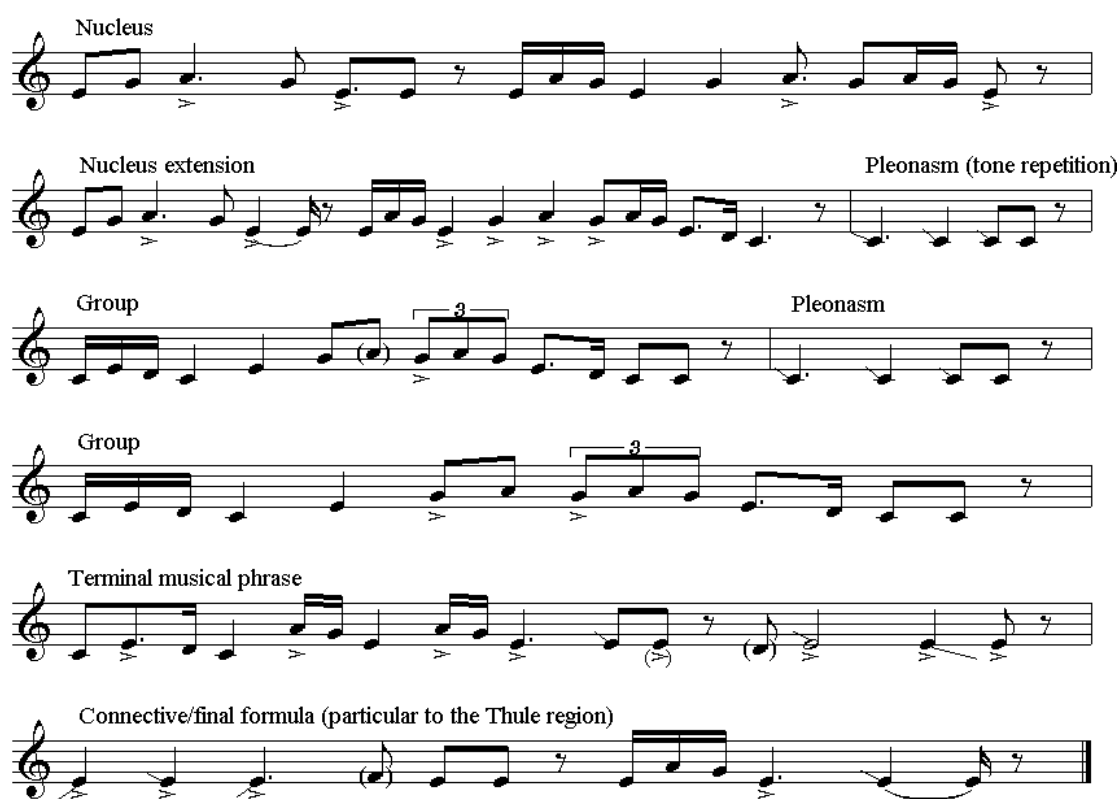


Fig. 15. Inuit song No. 40 from Hauser's collection, recorded by Christian Lune in 1909.

Continuing the process encountered in Sections B1 and B3, of askew combinations of bass lines with right hand melodies, Finnissy here draws upon the 'Menuett' from Schoenberg's *Suite für Klavier Op. 25* (Fig. 16), his first full-length work using twelve-tone techniques throughout.⁵⁶ In place of the pitches in Schoenberg's original work, Finnissy generates a thirteen note row, the first nine pitches from which are derived from those letters in Schoenberg's name (Arnold SCHoEnBERG) (Fig. 17)⁵⁷ which can be linked

⁵⁴ Hauser *Traditional Greenlandic Music*, p. 35. In an earlier collection of Inuit melodies, William Thalbitzer points out that most of the older songs use just four notes. See William Thalbitzer, *Inuit Sange og Danse fra Grønland/Inuit Songs and Dances from Greenland* (Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1939).

⁵⁵ Hauser, *Traditional Greenlandic Music*, pp. 218-219.

⁵⁶ Malcolm MacDonald memorably refers to this movement as 'the periwigged Minuet with its sternly professorial canonic Trio', also suggesting a certain humour and pastiche on Schoenberg's part. Whether or not Finnissy views Schoenberg's work as humorous or ironic, certainly the 'periwigged' and 'professorial' aspects of the piece seem to be at the heart of his allusion. See MacDonald, *Schoenberg* (London: Dent, 1987), pp. 162-163.

⁵⁷ As Schoenberg's row contained the B-A-C-H motive in retrograde form.

to a pitch (as did Berg in his *Kammerkonzert*),⁵⁸ followed by the other four pitches of the chromatic scale, then generates inversions, retrogrades and retrograde inversions from this row in the normal manner. Finnis simply selects rows from the resulting gamut of 24 thirteen-note rows) and substitutes these for the pitches in the Schoenberg 'Menuett', with octave displacements to maintain a characteristic angularity of contour. This is initially maintained within steady 3/4 measures, above which is placed the Inuit melody.



Fig. 16. Schoenberg, 'Menuett' from *Suite für Klavier Op. 25*.

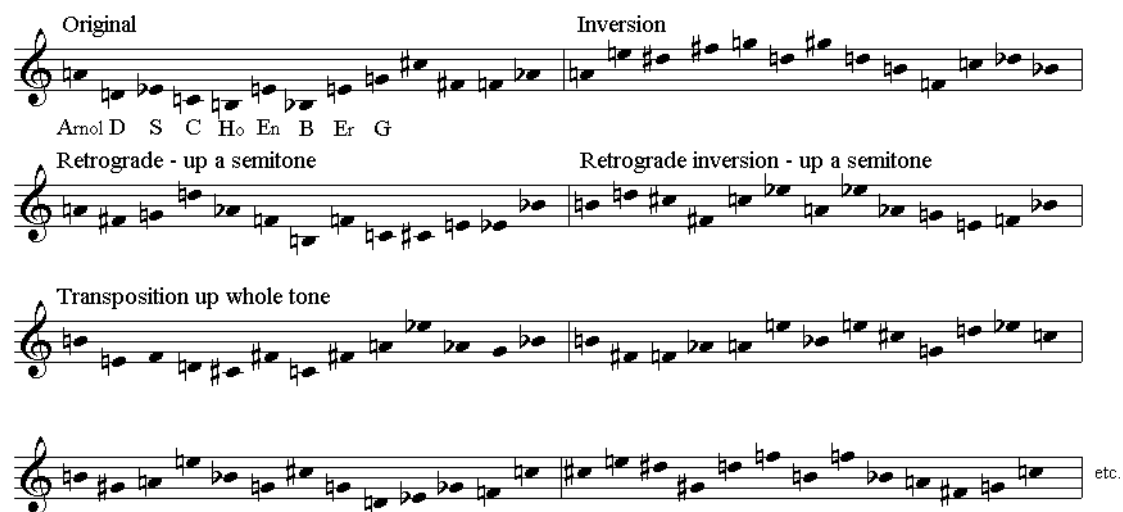


Fig. 17. Note rows after Arnold SCHoEnBERG.

J. Peter Burkholder maintains that consistently Schoenberg's atonal and twelve-tone music continue to 'extend the traditional idea of a harmonic accompaniment that

⁵⁸ This is shown in various commentaries on Berg or the Second Viennese School. See, for example, René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg and his School: The Contemporary Stage of the Language of Music*, translated Dika Newlin (New York: Da Capo, 1975), p. 154. Berg made the allusion explicit in a letter to Schoenberg of February 9th 1925. See Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey and Donald Harris (eds), *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), p. 337.

relates closely to and supports the melody above it'⁵⁹ and argues that Schoenberg extends principles first developed in the *Harmonielehre* towards 'a concept of complete equivalence between melody and harmony'.⁶⁰ Finnissy's writing here can be seen to be enacting the very reverse of this phenomenon, in which melody and harmony are stratified to the maximum, using rhythmic techniques as well as those of pitch. Only very occasionally does the pulse of the melody concur with that of the accompaniment,⁶¹ and the contrast between the near-dodecaphonic pitches of the bass and the pentatonic treble is very stark, so that for the most part they practically sound like two independent parts. Yet it is impossible to escape some sense of a quasi-tonal accompaniment progression, as has also been remarked about Schoenberg's music.⁶² Schoenberg himself spoke of how the 'possibility of such canons and imitations, and even fugues and fugatos, has been overestimated by analysts of this [twelve-tone] style' and that 'the meaning of composing in imitative style' was 'only one of the ways of adding a coherent accompaniment, or subordinate voices, to the main theme, whose character it thus helps to express more intensively'⁶³ with reference specifically to the *Suite*. To take this section of Finnissy's as a comment on a supposed Schoenbergian orthodoxy and ideology would be to misconstrue the particularity of the latter's intentions and methods in that piece.

Finnissy switches hands periodically, so the Inuit material is in the bass and the Schoenberg in the treble, but always here using the Inuit melodies in retrograde inverted form, thus applying a Schoenbergian technique to them (though the resulting material sounds relatively continuous with the 'straight' forms). All the four North Greenland melodies are relatively similar in nature, though the one from the South (Fig. 18), a *qivittoq* (elegy or song of regret),⁶⁴ stands out due to its slower pulse and use of four rather than five pitches.

Another type of correspondence is worked into the musical fabric by Finnissy by drawing specifically upon the combination of Transvaalian folk music with bass lines from Mozart and Schubert used later in *Unsere Afrikareise*, as a counterpart to the combination of Inuit folk music and Schoenberg that has preceded it.⁶⁵ The connection between the two juxtaposed material categories is perhaps mostly perceivable on a purely intellectual level, though disjunction between the hands links them both. Finnissy creates an aura around the *Unsere Afrikareise* passages through a hushed dynamic, slighter faster tempo, but then begins to blur the boundaries through shifts of key within one or other passage of material or linking use of regular quavers or dotted rhythms. Despite the disparate origins of both Vendan and Inuit melodies, their use of common three- or four-note modes together with repeated notes and grace notes cause them to appear generically similar, as part of a type of generalised 'folk music' contrasted with the more harmonically

⁵⁹ J. Peter Burkholder, 'Schoenberg the Reactionary' in Walter Frisch (ed), *Schoenberg and his World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 170-171.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 171.

⁶¹ In this sense the music does relate to Schoenberg's own description of the Trio, as 'a canon in which the difference between the long and short notes helps to avoid octaves'. See Schoenberg, 'Composition with Twelve Tones (I)' in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings*, edited Leonard Stein, translated Leo Black (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 235.

⁶² See, for example, Bryan R. Simms, 'Arnold Schoenberg' in Simms (ed), *Schoenberg, Berg and Webern: A Companion to the Second Viennese School* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 177.

⁶³ Schoenberg, 'Composition with Twelve Tones (I)', p. 235.

⁶⁴ Hauser, *Traditional Greenlandic Music*, p. 78.

⁶⁵ The sketches reveal abandoned material combining the Mozart minuets with French-Canadian folksongs, presumably to have been used in this section.

varied ‘classical’ accompaniments with which they are placed. Which is Inuit, which is Vandan, is no longer of particular consequence at this point.



Fig. 18. Inuit Song No. 19 from Hauser’s collection, second stanza, as transcribed by Måliårak Vebæk after hearing it sung by Juliane Mourtizen in 1963/65,⁶⁶ followed by Finnissy’s modified version.

Most of the music in *Le réveil* ‘points outside’ of itself, through its extremely fragmented, incomplete sounding nature, abounding in withheld resolutions, curtailed phrases, snippets of undeveloped material, and the like. The only sections that seem relatively self-contained are the two derived from the *Livre* and the combinations of Inuit melodies with Schoenberg. Yet somehow it does succeed to an extent as a self-contained entity (much more so, in my opinion, than the tantalising (though intense) survey presented in *Le démon*). This is due less to the materials as taken in isolation than to the way they are combined. The sheer diversity of the material involved, as well as the aforementioned qualities, make clear that this work is part of a much bigger tapestry, but it is quite different to, say, the *Poets*, which exhibits a similar range of material. This is because of the emphasis Finnissy places upon half-presences, blurred allusions rather than statements, either through the use of zooming in and out phrases in the first section, or the alienating combinations of materials in the second. The dramatic structure that he creates around these foregrounds interrelationships rather than individuated entities, a type of para-structuralist composition of which Barthes might have approved. Few of the materials used sound particularly similar in their subsequent appearances; closer correspondences exist between the very forms of material combination and relationship used in *Kapitalistisch Realisme* and *Unsere Afrikareise* (for which some of Section B acts as form of prototype, despite its having been composed later). Sections B1-B3 are repeated almost verbatim in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, but there they serve as momentary light relief within an otherwise extremely intense work, rather than as a development towards the Inuit/Schoenberg music as happens here.

It was a daring strategy of Finnissy to open the cycle with two pieces that can both be considered ‘Preludes’. But this second of these has much more of the quality of an extended ‘upbeat’ to something which is to come (as with much of Sciarrino’s music), so that in retrospect *Le démon* sounds relatively monolithic in comparison. Fleeting and relatively light-toned, always expressing anticipation and potency, *Le réveil* can be heard as a way of aurally conveying Barthes’ ‘Desire without mediation’, even desire as an abstraction that exists prior to its fixation on a particular object or person (to add a Deleuzian twist). It will be a long time until that object of desire becomes apparent, right up until *Sizilianische Männerakte*. But this desire has a photographic quality as well – the presentation of the musical ‘objects’ says as much about the way they are musically

⁶⁶ Hauser, *Traditional Greenlandic Music*, p. 95.

‘photographed’ as *what* is being photographed. Mediation superseding its particular applications itself becomes unmediated desire, a statement which is less self-contradictory than it might initially appear. In a world dominated by the language of ‘image’, in the form of reified categories into which human beings, culture and much else are forced – as is common in Hollywood cinema, for example – this piece instead deals with image as an abstraction, a far remove from an objectified vocabulary of ‘images’.

Chapter 3: *North American Spirituals*

Finnissy’s relationship with the United States and with American music in general is deep-rooted and also highly individual. He has cited the music of Charles Ives as one of his primary formative influences, saying of Ives’s music that ‘its inclusiveness and the way it reflects man’s thoughts and ideas, remain a kind of totem for me’.⁶⁷ The music of Ives, with its combination of surrealism and primitivism, clearly stands behind a piece like *English Country-Tunes* (1977, revised 1982-85); Finnissy also wrote a piano piece entitled *Ives* (1974), and other works alluding to specific American music, including *Nancarrow* (1979-80), *William Billings* (1990), *John Cage* (1992), the fourth book of *Folklore* (1993-94),⁶⁸ a setting of Jerome Kern’s *Can’t Help But Lovin’ Dat Man* (1990), and of course the two books of *Gershwin Arrangements* (1975-90). Also works like *Jazz* (1976), *Boogie-Woogie* (1980, final revision 1996) and *That Ain’t Shit* (2004) allude obliquely to early jazz (especially that of Jelly Roll Morton). His interest in the American ‘experimental’ tradition (including such figures as Henry Cowell, Conlon Nancarrow, John Cage, Morton Feldman or Christian Wolff) equals if not exceeds his corresponding interest in continental European contemporary musical traditions. However, it is hard to think of almost any engagements with more recent American popular culture in Finnissy’s work; such music plays little part in his cultural world, it would seem. The ‘America’, at least in terms of popular culture, with which Finnissy engages with intellectually and musically, is for the most part one of six or seven decades ago at the latest.⁶⁹

In his two ‘Australian’ cycles⁷⁰, Finnissy entered into an engagement with the ‘native’ Australian music and culture of the Aboriginal people in one, then with the ‘colonial’ music of the white settlers in the other. Finnissy alluded to Native American folk music and culture in a cycle from the early 1980s using sources from the Hopi people of Northern Arizona;⁷¹ in *North American Spirituals*, a certain representation of the music of African-Americans, borne out of the experience of slavery, is central to the work, in conjunction with representations of the music of white settlers as well. The African-American music that Finnissy alludes to here and elsewhere is, however, that first created

⁶⁷ ‘Conversations with Michael Finnissy’ in *Uncommon Ground*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ See Ian Pace, ‘The Piano Music’ in *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 127-132 for a discussion of this ‘American’ part of *Folklore*. Also pp. 111-127 for other allusions to American music throughout the work.

⁶⁹ However, one should not neglect to bear in mind the potential copyright issues involved were Finnissy to directly allude to music not yet in the public domain.

⁷⁰ The first of these, the ‘Aboriginal’ cycle, consists of the works *Teangi*, *Warara*, *Aijal*, *Banumbirr*, *Marrngu*, *Ulpirra*, *Hikkai*, *Ouraa* and *Quabara* (the latter piece written some five years after the others); the second of *Botany Bay*, *Australian Sea Shanties Sets 1, 2, 3* and *The Eureka Flag*.

⁷¹ The pieces in question are *Sikangnuqa*, *Pavasiya* and *Talawva*.

in earlier eras – Finnissy has not sought to engage with soul, funk or hip-hop, for example⁷² – whereas the ‘white’ music extends into the present day.

The following is Finnissy’s note for the *Spirituals* as part of his programme note for the whole *History*:

Billings – Ives – Cowell – Nancarrow. Confronting Afro-American spiritual responses to slavery: Nobody knows the trouble I see; By and by; Go down, Moses; Steal away. Appropriated by Michael Tippett in *A Child of our Time* to signify the voices of defiance and hope everywhere and at any period of history.⁷³

The African-American spiritual⁷⁴ seems to have emerged in the nineteenth century from a combination of African music and European hymns (as transplanted to America).⁷⁵ The texts clearly emerge from Old Testament parables, but as the writer Arthur C. Jones points out, one should reject the misconception that that ‘enslaved Africans, once acculturated in the new land abandoned their own traditions (usually thought of, by those ignorant of the backgrounds, as heathen) and became ‘civilized’ via the adoption of the Christian religion of their slave masters’.⁷⁶ A large-scale conversion to Christianity did not occur until near the end of slavery, with enslaved people holding onto traditional religious beliefs and practices, something which was strengthened with the arrival of new captives.⁷⁷

Originally monophonic, spirituals combined hymn-like tunes with hand-clapping, foot-tapping, and moaning-style inflections that were characteristic of African-American religious music of the time, and have origins in the ‘ring shout’, a ceremony in which verbal utterances were expressed collectively.⁷⁸ Written documents from the times of

⁷² That said, connections between some of Finnissy’s piano writing and the free jazz of Cecil Taylor have been commented upon by himself and others. See Richard Barrett, ‘Michael Finnissy – An Overview’, in *Contemporary Music Review* Vol. 13 Part 1 (1995), ‘Aspects of Complexity in Recent British Music’, edited Tom Morgan, p. 42.

⁷³ Finnissy, note on *History*.

⁷⁴ There are a variety of terms that are and have been used for the spirituals (including ‘negro spirituals’ or ‘black spirituals’). I will call them either ‘African-American spirituals’ or simply ‘spirituals’. Eileen Southern cites the root of the term ‘spiritual’ in ‘the three species of sacred song early set up in the history of Protestantism – psalms, hymns, and spirituals – which, in turn, points to Scriptures, Col. 3:16’. When the term ‘spiritual’ (or ‘sperichel’) was used in the introduction to *Slave Songs of the United States* in 1867, it was not defined, from which she concludes ‘the term must have been in common usage by the 1860s’. See Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, third edition (New York and London: Norton, 1997), pp. 180-181.

⁷⁵ The history I present here derives from a reading of a wide range of sources that are listed in subsequent footnotes.

⁷⁶ Arthur C. Jones, *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 7.

⁷⁸ Eileen Southern points out that ‘For the participants the shout was not under any circumstances to be construed as a dance, and strictly observed rules insured that the line between “shouting” and dancing was firmly drawn. Only songs of a religious nature were sung, and the feet must never be crossed (as would happen in the dance). Among strict devotees, the feet must not even be lifted from the ground. Presumably, any song could function as a shout song or “running spiritual.” In practice, however, the slaves preferred some songs to the exclusion of others, and a special body of these songs was developed among them.’ (Southern, *The Music of Black America*, p. 182). For an early description of the ‘shout’ from the N.Y. Nation of May 30 1867, see William Francis Allen, ‘From *Slave Songs of the United States*’ (1867), in Eileen Southern (ed), *Readings in Black American Music* (New York and London: Norton, 1983), pp. 156-158.

slavery show that most of the songs are seen to use major or pentatonic scales,⁷⁹ which as Eileen Southern points out, generally produce 'bright, cheerful melodies', though 'the slaves' singing rarely was bright and cheerful; it was generally described as plaintive, mournful, or wild'.⁸⁰ She concludes that whilst such scales formed the basis of the music, some of the tones were probably 'flatted or "bent" to a lower pitch'; also on the basis of some hints in the 1867 volume of *Slave Songs* that probably it was the seventh tone of the scale that was flattened.⁸¹ It also appears that singers would begin a refrain before a leader finished their solo, and a new solo might begin before the refrain was over, thus producing a homophonic effect, which is commonly known as *overlapping call-and-response patterns*.⁸²

Following the end of the American Civil War and the abolition of formal slavery, spirituals began to be written down, published, and disseminated to wider audiences, with the Fisk Jubilee Singers playing a pioneering role in this process. Key published texts were *Slave Songs of the United States* (1867), edited by William Francis Allen, Lucy McKim Garrison, and Charles Pickard Ware,⁸³ followed by *Jubilee Songs: As Sung by the Jubilee Singers, of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee* (1872), under the auspices of the American Missionary Association,⁸⁴ the latter of which added harmonisations to the melodies.

Michael Tippett, in what is perhaps his best-known work, *A Child of our Time* (1939-41), written as part of a personal response to the shooting of a German diplomat in Paris by the Polish Jew Herschel Grynszpan which led to the pogrom *Reichskristallnacht* of November 9th, 1938,⁸⁵ employed five African-American spirituals at pivotal moments during the work, intended to function in a manner akin to the Lutheran chorales in Bach's Passions.⁸⁶ These were (in the order in which they occur) 'Steal away', 'Nobody knows the trouble I see', 'Go down, Moses' (described in the score by Tippett as 'A

⁷⁹ Tilford Brooks lists typical scales as 'the major, natural minor, mixed major and minor, pentatonic, hexatonic (lacking either the fourth or the seventh tone), major with both raised and lowered seventh tone, major with lowered seventh tone, minor with lowered seventh tone, and minor with raised seventh tone' (see Tilford Brooks, *America's Black Musical Heritage* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), p. 36), whilst pointing out that the most striking departures are to be found in spirituals in the minor mode, many raising the sixth tone or omitting it altogether (ibid. p. 37).

⁸⁰ Southern, *The Music of Black America*, p. 192. Henry Krehbiel takes a different view, arguing against that the 'popular conception' of 'the minor mode as a symbol of suffering' and the associations of poignancy, and speaking of utterances of 'resilient hopefulness and cheerful endurance of present pain in contemplation of the rewards of rest and happiness hereafter', giving 'Nobody Knows' as an example of a song that touches upon 'The two emotional poles in question'. See Henry Edward Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs: A Study in Racial and National Music* (New York and London: Schirmer, 1914), pp. 44-45. It may seem crass even to ask this question, but it could be argued that Krehbiel is identifying the possibility that the spirituals could have served in part as a means of reconciling slaves to their situation, which would be a disturbing and radical conclusion.

⁸¹ Southern, *The Music of Black America*, p. 192.

⁸² Ibid. p. 197.

⁸³ A modern edition is William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison (eds), *Slave Songs of the United States* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1996). See Dena J. Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 303-341 for more information on this publication.

⁸⁴ *Jubilee Songs; As Sung by the Jubilee Singers, of Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.*, under the Auspices of the American Missionary Association, with afterword by Erastus M. Cravath (New York: Biglow & Main, [1872])

⁸⁵ See Merion Bowen, *Michael Tippett*, revised second edition (London: Robson Books, 1997), p. 17.

⁸⁶ Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth-Century Blues: An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p. 50.

Spiritual of Anger'), 'By and by' and 'Deep River', drawing upon the now-classic collection of spirituals edited by James Weldon Johnson.⁸⁷

Tippett himself made some quite exalted claims for their significance and universality, saying that 'we *all* are moved by them beyond the power of the tunes as mere music, yet the spirituals themselves have turned and twisted Bible language into a modern dialect; the stories they tell of the Bible Jews are used to comfort Negroes in the bitterness of oppression, and I use these Negro spirituals to symbolize the agony of modern Jews in Hitler's Europe. It makes a powerful, condensed poetic image. Not only did the spirituals give me a kind of spirit-level folk-poetry to which the rest of the text had to conform, but so also did the music'.⁸⁸ Responses of early critics were somewhat more mixed,⁸⁹ with one critic pointing out how 'Bach's use of the chorale was contained within his own musical and cultural horizons whereas Tippett is attempting to transfer, perhaps translate, a musical idiom which lies outside his own context, producing a certain degree of dislocation between the two'.⁹⁰ This is certainly true, but the problems inherent in appropriating the spirituals run deeper, in a way that some of Tippett's more hagiographic commentators have tended to evade; Ian Kemp asserts that 'The spiritual epitomized a fundamental emotional experience, not limited to oppressed blacks in nineteenth-century America but understood everywhere',⁹¹ presupposing in a romanticised fashion some degree of mutual emotional empathy between all oppressed people (if not all people) which, at the very least, recent events in former Yugoslavia and Israel/Palestine certainly contradict. Kenneth Gloag, however, much more perceptively suggests that Tippett's claiming 'a universal significance for the spiritual' is a view that 'now may seem somewhat optimistic but one which accentuates Tippett's concern for the generalisation of human experience'.⁹²

These issues are equally pertinent to *North American Spirituals*, especially in light of Finnissy's comment cited earlier about the spirituals representing 'the voices of hope and defiance everywhere', thus making comparable universalist claims for music from a particular time and place. As an admirer of Tippett's music, Finnissy had earlier paid indirect homage to the older composer's work by the prominent use of 'Deep River' in the second and fourth parts of *Folklore*.⁹³ In *North American Spirituals* he alludes, on a

⁸⁷ A recent edition of which is James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, two volumes (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003). All of the spirituals which Tippett and Finnissy set are included in here. They are all fitted out with quite elaborate and more-than-a-little kitschy piano accompaniments, the preface however saying that in these 'the arrangers have sincerely striven to give the characteristic harmonies that would be used in spontaneous group singing'. (Vol. 1, p. 37). Kenneth Gloag shows in detail how Tippett alters the harmonies in Johnson's book, sometimes simplifying them. See Gloag, *Tippett: A Child of our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 71-84.

⁸⁸ Michael Tippett, 'The Nameless Hero: Reflections on *A Child of our Time*', in *Tippett on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 182-183.

⁸⁹ See William McNaught, review of *A Child of our Time*, in *The Musical Times* No. 85 (May 1944), p. 144, cited in Gloag, *A Child of our Time*, p. 91; and Eric Blom, review of *A Child of our Time*, in *Music and Letters* No. 25 (1944), p. 124, cited in Gloag, *A Child of our Time*, p. 91.

⁹⁰ Gloag, *A Child of our Time*, p. 92.

⁹¹ Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 158.

⁹² Gloag, *A Child of our Time*, p. 28.

⁹³ See Pace, 'The Piano Music', in *Uncommon Ground* for more on this. For another perspective on this work, see Maarten Beirens, 'Archaeology of the Self: Michael Finnissy's 'Folklore'', in *Tempo*, Vol. 57 No. 223 (January 2003), pp. 46-56. The use of 'Deep River' in the earlier work is also discussed in Jonathan Cross, 'Vive la différence' in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 137, No. 1837 (March 1996), pp. 7-13.

variety of levels, to all of the remaining four spirituals used by Tippett, in the same order. But in both works, Finnissy's appropriation of this music is quite unlike the lush use of the same melodies by Tippett; also, in *North American Spirituals* their relationship with the surrounding material is somewhat more intricate and involved.⁹⁴ In *Folklore*, 'Deep River' served primarily as a moment of repose, even pathos, after frenetic writing leading up to it in the second part, and as a hazy, somewhat dark coda in the last. Here Finnissy seems to have wished to explore the possibilities of a deeper level of integration subsequent to the earlier work.

Finnissy structures *North American Spirituals* around four nodal points, weaving the spirituals into hymn tunes from the eighteenth-century Boston choral composer William Billings (1746-1800), mentioned earlier. The publication of Billings' *The New-England Psalm-Singer* in 1770 was a major event in terms of the publication of sacred compositions in America, its 127 works increasing the number of such by a factor of ten.⁹⁵ The hymns alluded explicitly to Boston and Massachusetts locations and churches, using religious texts to comment on contemporary events,⁹⁶ in a manner that may bear comparison with the uses of texts in African-American spirituals. Billings' career was launched just a few years before American independence, which when coupled with the nationalistic nature of some of his words and sentiments (the piece 'Chester', from *The New-England Psalm-Singer*, became amongst the most popular of patriotic songs in the 1770s),⁹⁷ led to his being assigned a symbolical role as a type of father of American composition by some historians and hymnodists.⁹⁸

The strategy Finnissy employs involves to combine the spirituals with the Billings entails removal of the original tenor part of the hymns (in which Billings would usually place the tune),⁹⁹ and substitution of the pitches of one of the spirituals (maintaining Billings' rhythms). The chorale itself is modified, so that the other parts are 'forced to comply', modifying each of them by the interval by which the spiritual melody differs from the original (sometimes shifting octaves), mirroring some of Billings' own rather idiosyncratic techniques as laid out in his books.¹⁰⁰ The effect is strange and disorienting, literally as if one part is threatening to disrupt the others (which, according to Billings' own definition, should be 'forced to comply and conform to that').¹⁰¹ Finnissy intended this as a musical representation of a white church service in which a black man is forced to attend, but subverts the proceedings by singing a quite different tune of his own¹⁰² (and it is for this reason that I believe a performance which seeks to play down the dissonances

⁹⁴ Which is not to say that Tippett's use of them is not. See Kemp, *Tippett*, pp. 164-66 and 172 for more on this.

⁹⁵ See Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York and London: Norton, 2001), pp. 38-39.

⁹⁶ For more on Billings' texts, see J. Murray Barbour, *The Church Music of William Billings* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1960), pp. 1-13. For all its biographical inaccuracies, Barbour's book presents the most comprehensive survey of Billings' music of all the sources I cite here.

⁹⁷ See Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York and London: Norton, 1983), p. 142.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 41-42.

⁹⁹ See Wilfred Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music*, revised and expanded edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Especially in *The Continental Harmony*, his last collection (see pp. i-xxxiv). See also Mellers, *Music in a New Found Land*, pp. 12-17, for more on Billings' techniques.

¹⁰¹ Billings, *The Continental Harmony*, p. xxxi.

¹⁰² As related to me in private conversations with the composer. It is fair to call the implied singer a 'he' since the part is always in the tenor.

and somehow 'contain' the discontinuous progressions violates something of the essence of the music). The resulting chord progression, sometimes clumsy, involving undefinable chords and strange enharmonic relations, is a long way from anything that would have been sung by an eighteenth century New England congregation.

The work can thus be demarcated into four sections, each beginning with the Billings/spiritual material. Of these, the second section is by far the longest and most intricate (the final section, on the other hand, is extremely brief). The overall layout is as follows.

A: *Steal Away*

Opening with Billings, 'Bedford'¹⁰³ combined with 'Steal away' (Fig. 19), in F. An alternation of a free rhapsody around an inversion of 'Steal away' with material I call 'Anger/Ivesian' (alluding stylistically to the most tempestuous piano writing of Charles Ives), culminating in a coda which combines 'Steal away' with 'Nobody know the trouble I see'.

STEAL AWAY

Slowly

Steal a-way, steal a-way, steal a-way to Je-sus! Steal a-way,

6 steal a-way home, I ain't got long to stay here. My Lord - calls me, He

11 calls me by the thun-der; The trum-pet sounds with -

14 in a my soul: I ain't got long to stay here

Fine

D.C. al Fine

Fig. 20. 'Steal Away'.

B: *Nobody knows the trouble I see*

Opening with Billings, 'Sing Praises to the Lord' (Fig. 21),¹⁰⁴ combined with 'Nobody knows the trouble I see' (Fig. 22), in G. An abstract canon around 'Nobody knows', dry, hard, acerbic, though also somewhat in the style of a duet for two African marimbas, a free rhapsody around 'Nobody knows', intercut with a dialogue between 'By and by' and a further two-part abstracted canon from 'Steal Away' leading to introduction of more intensely abstract material in parody of 'East Coast serialism'. Then into this already complex dialogue, introduction of further material combining renditions of songs of Stephen Foster with transcribed microtonal material (with intervals doubled) from elsewhere in Finnissy's sketch material, leading to silences, fragmentation, then some

¹⁰³ From Billings, *The Psalm-Singer's Amusement*.

¹⁰⁴ From Billings, *The Continental Harmony*, pp. 70-75. In this volume the chorale is called 'An Anthem for Thanksgiving Day', but Finnissy refers to it in the sketches as 'Sing Praises to the Lord'.

prefiguration of material in *Alkan-Paganini* and a two-part abstracted canon from 'Nobody knows' and 'Go down, Moses', leading to a clearer and hushed combination of these two in the coda.

C: *Go down, Moses*

Opening with Billings, 'Dudley'¹⁰⁵, combined with 'Go down, Moses' (Fig. 23), in B-flat. Extension of this material in dialogue with a free rhapsody around inverted 'Go down, Moses'. A 'false coda' combining 'Go down, Moses' and 'By and by' (seeming like a coda on the basis of the previous sections), then the section is brought to an end with a passage permeated by weighty clusters, as a homage to Henry Cowell.

D: *By and by*

Opening with Billings, 'Essex'¹⁰⁶ combined with 'By and by' (Fig. 24), in B-flat. Free rhapsody around 'By and by' interspersed with material relating to Conlon Nancarrow (polyrhythmic, staccato, close tessitura) and ragtime, ending with the Billings/spiritual material again.

As well as the employment of the melodies of the spirituals as one voice in the hymns, and the composition of relatively free rhapsodies around each of them, Finnissy finds other ways of mediating this material whilst still preserving some of its properties, such as by inverting the intervals, or having the rhythms shifted 'out of step' by one unit (so that a melody begins on the second rhythmic unit of the original, and proceeds from there) - both of which maintain the essential pentatonic quality of the music - or even dividing the melodies into pitch cells which can then be permuted. And as well as combining this music with the Billings hymns, Finnissy also chooses to surround it with material from later periods in American musical history, such as a range of passages derived from (mostly retrogrades) of nineteenth-century white American composers such as Horatio Parker, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Edward Macdowell, and others.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ From Billings, *The Singing Master's Assistant: Music in Miniature*.

¹⁰⁶ From Billings, *The New England Psalm-Singer*.

¹⁰⁷ Many of the nineteenth-century white American sources used in this chapter can be found in John Gillespie (ed), *Nineteenth-Century American Piano Music* (New York: Dover, 1978).

Soprano

Contralto

Tenor

Bass

Sing praises, sing praises, sing praises

S.

C.

T.

B.

to the Lord O ye fai - nts of his

S.

C.

T.

B.

for his wrath end - ures but a mom - ent

for his wrath end - ures but a mom - ent

Fig. 21. William Billings, 'An Anthem for Thanksgiving Day Morning'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ This can be found in Billings, *The Continental Harmony*, pp. 70-75.

NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEE

No - bo - dy knows the trou - ble I see, No - bo - dy knows my sor - row

5 No - bo - dy knows the trou - ble I see, Glo - ry hal - le - lu - ia! Some times I'm up, some

10 times I'm down, Oh, yes, Lord! Some -

13 times I'm al - most to the groun', Oh, yes, Lord.

Fig. 22. 'Nobody knows the trouble I see'.

GO DOWN, MOSES

When Is - rael was in E - gypt's land: Let my peo - ple go, - Op pressed so hard they

could not stand, Let my peo - ple go. Go down, Mo - ses, Way down in

E - gypt's land, Tell ole Pha - raoh, Let my peo - ple go.

Fig. 23. 'Go Down, Moses'.

BY AN' BY

Oh, by__ an' by,__ by__ an' by__ I'm gwin ter lay down my hea vy load._ O,

hea vy load_ I know my robes gwin ter fit me well, ___ I'm gwin ter lay down my

hea vy load_ I tried it on at de gates of hell, ___ I'm gwin ter lay down my

hea vy load. O' hea vy load._ O' by__ an' by,__ by__ an' by,__

I'm gwin ter lay down my hea vy load. O' hea vy load._

Fig. 24. 'By an' by'.

But the nature and range of the allusions suggest the music of Charles Ives as much as any other part of the cycle, and this comes to the fore in some quite violent (or at least boisterous) passages in Section A (referred to above as 'Anger/Ivesian'), which serve the role of temporary 'explosions' of material akin to those elsewhere in the cycle, though continuous melodies, almost always in the tenor line, remain intact in the midst of other tempestuous writing around them. The passages in general serve a function akin to that in the wilder moments of Ives's 'Hawthorne' from the *Concord Sonata* (Fig. 25), or perhaps even more specifically, his 'Rough and Ready et al. (and/or The Jumping Frog)' from the *Five Take-Offs* (1906-1907). Overall, here he combines a multiplicity of Ivesian characteristics: a mostly step-wise melody (as in parts of 'Rough and Ready'), this melody having diatonic characteristics in a dissonant environment (as in 'Hawthorne'), a line of strongly accentuated groups of four semiquavers (as in the *Study No. 22*) in a polyrhythmic relationship with the other parts (something that can be found widely throughout Ives's output, especially that for piano), and in time some music reminiscent of a march tune also in the manner of 'Hawthorne'.

ff

ff (quite fast again) *f* *f* *r.h.* *f*



Fig. 25. Ives, Three fragments from 'Hawthorne' from Piano Sonata No. 2 "*Concord, Mass 1840-1860*".

A series of inserts, derived from two sources, provide almost comical breaks from the Ivesian material. One of these consists of music associated with a 'Bead Giving Ritual' and 'Cloth Giving Dance' of the Tutelo Native American tribe (Fig. 26) (once resident in Virginia and North Carolina, now intermingled amongst the Iroquois, who took up their rituals on Six Nations Reserve, Ontario),¹⁰⁹ which Finnissy configures in two parts almost like a minuet. The other source comes from an eighteenth-century book of music from the Indian subcontinent primarily for young European ladies (living in colonial India) to play at the harpsichord, which has received some attention from various scholars in recent times perhaps on account of its sheer novelty. The piece in question which Finnissy cites is taken from the collection 'Hindoostannie Airs' by William Crotch (Fig. 27),¹¹⁰ and is generally used in the form of retrograded fragments. Finnissy configures the Tutelo material in such a way as to form a continuity with that of the 'Hindoostannie Air', so that the composite material provides a momentary tonal (and static) reprieve from the raging material that surrounds them.

¹⁰⁹ See Kurath, *Tutelo Rituals*, pp. 25-35 for more information on the sources in question.

¹¹⁰ William Crotch published a volume entitled *Specimens of Several Styles of Music* (1808), itself drawing in part upon an earlier collection (from sometime in the 1780s) called *Indoostani Airs*, compiled by Margaret Fowkes. The material that Finnissy uses comes from Ian Woodfield, 'Collecting Indian Songs in Late 18th Century Lucknow: Problems of Transcription', in *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 3 (1994), pp. 73-88. See Raymond Head, 'Corelli in Calcutta: Colonial Music-Making in India in the 17th and 18th Centuries', in *Early Music* Vol. 13 No. 4 (Nov. 1985), pp. 548-553 for more on the subject. For a wider overview of this subject, see Ian Woodfield, 'The 'Hindoostannie Air': English Attempts to Understand Indian Music in the Late Eighteenth Century', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 119 No. 2 (1994), pp. 189-211, Nicholas Cook, 'Encountering the Other, Redefining the Self: Hindoostannie Airs, Haydn's folksong settings, and the 'common practice' style', available at <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/mmm/new-directions/Cook-Encountering.pdf> (accessed 21/8/13) (Cook's article takes a somewhat more benevolent view) and Richard Leppert, 'Music, domestic life and cultural chauvinism: images of British subjects at home in India', in Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (eds), *Music and Society: The politics of composition, performance and reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 63-104.



Fig. 26. Fragments from music for two Tutelo ‘Spirit Adoption’ ceremonies: ‘Bead-Giving Ritual’ and ‘Cloth Giving Dance’.¹¹¹



Fig. 27. From ‘Hindoostanie Air’, ‘Rektah’, from William Crotch – *Specimens of Various Styles of Music*.¹¹²

On a symbolical level, one might conceivably read this as a musical drama akin to the interpretation by Edward Said of Jane Austen’s novel *Mansfield Park*, in which the various goings-on of the privileged characters at the English estate are only made possible by overseas sustenance, in this case a plantation in Antigua (mentioned only in passing in the novel, but fundamental to the family income) which would have been run by slave labour at the time Austen wrote her novel¹¹³. Similarly, Finnissey presents a quasi-cinematic montage of the savagery of slave labour and the rage of the dispossessed on one hand, and the genteel world of young ladies appropriating the music of the slaves or colonial subjects for their own private drawing-room consumption. At least one might hear that if one knows the sources in question. In a purely aural sense the contrast between tempestuousness and relentlessness, and a rather off-the-wall gentility, made manifest through the gentler density of notes, constrained central registers, and cadential implications of the Tutelo/Hindoostanie material, makes for something whose abstract properties might connect with those of such an experience.

The second section of the work is the most extended and constitutes the heart of the whole piece. Above all it attempts a near-impossible reconciliation between the semantically and emotionally charged music of the spirituals with the highly abstract techniques associated with the pseudo-scientific world of American serial music in the

¹¹¹ Kurath, *Tutelo Rituals*. Figs. 3.5 and 3.7.

¹¹² In Woodfield, ‘Collecting Indian Songs’, p. 82.

¹¹³ Said argues that ‘Austen affirms and repeats the geographical process of expansion involving trade, production, and consumption that predates, underlies, and guarantees the morality’ (Edward Said, ‘Consolidated Vision: Jane Austen and Empire’, in *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 111).

twentieth century. In this context Finnissy ventures into a type of interplay between materials whose compositional nature is as veiled as anything up until *Unsere Afrikareise*: highly abstracted derivations from spirituals, presented in a highly dry and anti-‘expressive’, mechanistic, fashion, but which still preserve some of the spirituals qualities, in terms of pitch contour, use of repeated notes, and some other factors; and genuinely abstract material, whether coming out of microtonal material¹¹⁴ with intervals doubled (as he had in other works halved intervals of chromatic writing in order to generate microtonal lines).¹¹⁵ On a symbolical level it could be read as a further type of ‘assimilation’ of black music into the language of East Coast serialism, continuing such a process of varying appropriation as is enacted through the course of this work. In aural terms one can hear the melodic qualities of the spirituals ultimately dissolve completely.

Finnissy's use of the songs of Stephen Foster (1826-1864)¹¹⁶ adds to the complicated dialogue with issues of appropriation and cross-cultural tension, especially if we are to imagine that Finnissy shares something like the following view of Foster:

Stephen Foster's further claim to the affection of Americans is that he sings primarily of the Negro and that his songs were born at the very time when the Negro was a paramount subject in the United States. Stephen Foster revolutionized the art of Negro minstrelsy, a strictly American form of entertainment, raising it from the level of coarseness and buffoonery to one of humor and pathos.¹¹⁷

If so, then the relationship between the black music he combines with Foster's songs is more complicated than in other parts of the piece (not that it is simple there), at least in terms of intention. The Foster melodies are made to grow relatively seamlessly out of the inverted spiritual melody, though a shift is palpable through the initial harmonisation and creation of firmer tonal harmony (as there is no other part at a lower register than the melodies) and clear melodic profile.

¹¹⁴ Almost certainly this derives from unused material for the quarter-tone keyboard part in Finnissy's orchestral work *Speak its Name* (1996). See Julian Anderson, ‘The Orchestral Works’, pp. 206-208, for more on this work.

¹¹⁵ This was, for example, a technique he used in the series of *Obrecht Motetten* (1989-1993) for ensemble, when transforming material from Obrecht.

¹¹⁶ The songs cited by Finnissy are, in order, ‘Come where my love lies dreaming’ (1855), ‘Don't bet your money on ole Shanghai’ (1861), ‘Down among the Cane-brakes’ (1860), ‘Gentle Annie’ (1856), ‘Ah may the red rose live always’ (1850), ‘Beautiful Dreamer’ (1862), ‘Better Times are Coming’ (1862), and ‘Camptown Races’ (1850).

¹¹⁷ See <http://www.bobjanuary.com/foster/sf1.htm> (accessed 21/8/13). Alain Locke (who associates one of the periods of African-American music he delineates, ‘The First Age of Minstrelsy’ (1850-1875) with ‘Stephen Foster and the Sentimental Ballad’) argues that whilst Foster did have some first-hand experience of plantation singing he, like children's story writer Joel Chandler Harris, ‘watered the original down just enough to give it the touch of universality, and yet not enough to destroy entirely its unique folk flavor. But neither service ... was an unmixed blessing’ (Locke. *The Negro and his Music and Negro Art: Past and Present* (1939), reprint (New York: Arno Press, 1969), p. 47). Locke goes further to suggest that ‘With the vogue of these songs the sentimental side of the plantation legend wormed its way into the heart of America for better or worse, mostly worse. For with its shallow sentiment and crocodile tears went an unfortunate and undeserved glorification of the slave regime’ (ibid. pp. 47-48).

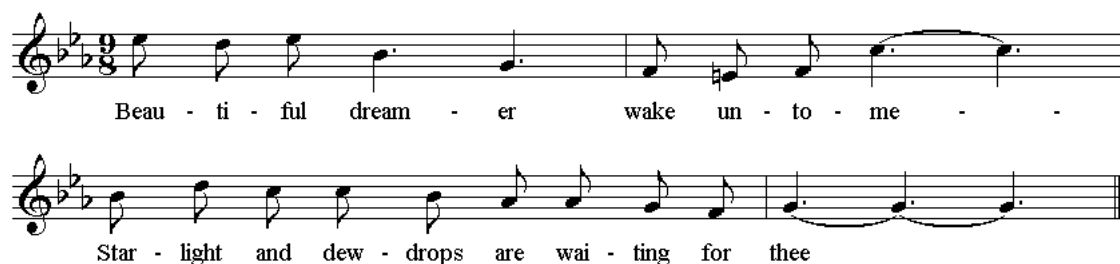


Fig. 28. Stephen Foster, 'Beautiful Dreamer' (1862).

Alain Locke speaks of how one can 'Over-emphasize the melodic elements of a spiritual, and you get a sentimental ballad à la Stephen Foster'.¹¹⁸ Whether or not expressing something of this situation was Finnissy's intention, the replacement of the spirituals with such sentimental melodies in light of the previous partial denouement of processes of abstraction has the quality of a hopeless and futile gesture in such a context, and it is at these moments that Finnissy employs carefully quasi-cadential (but incomplete) long-range harmonies from which the music tapers into silence. This is a powerful and disorienting moment in the piece, at which point almost anything would seem to be able to happen. Finnissy has often used long silences in his work, not least in his early piano piece *Song 9*.¹¹⁹ Small developments do appear to occur during the three silences in question, especially in terms of gradual shifts upwards in register, and the introduction of added embellishment. But from this and the succeeding bleak section, it is not easy for Finnissy to steer the music back on track to a context where the Billings/spiritual music can appear again with a degree of confidence.

Ultimately Finnissy pushes his materials as far as possible only to find that non-reconciliation and mutual incomprehensibility represent a void, after which the music needs must be artificially pushed back on track. Such a scenario could be argued to be contrived as much as being inevitable, of course, and the very politics of writing this type of work almost precludes by default the possibility of some optimistic reconciliation.

The most remarkable events in sections C and D come from some of the 'Canadian' material envisaged for the earlier version of *Le réveil*, simply in the form of three excerpts whose symbolic titles would spell 'CANADA' (eventually simply 'C-N-D'). These were based on music by Henry Cowell ('C'), Conlon Nancarrow ('N') and ragtime by Homer Denney ('D'); into each is incorporated either a Canadian melody or one collected by a Canadian.¹²⁰ The last of these combines a Métis song with a rag from

¹¹⁸ Locke, *The Negro and his Music*, p. 21.

¹¹⁹ Finnissy compared his silences there to those to be found in Stockhausen's *Klavierstück X*, saying that the 'many (so-called) silences interspersed amongst the material' constitute 'a way of trying to incorporate *non-action*, or things going out of sight which you assume are nonetheless continuing into the formal structure' (Finnissy in interview with Richard Toop, in Toop, 'Four Facets of the New Complexity', *Contact* 32 (1988), p. 9).

¹²⁰ The melodies in question are a Haitian melody collected in a Canadian ethnomusicological journal: Claude Dauphin, 'Genèse et éclosion du métalangage musical dans le conte-chanté haïtien', in Robert Witmer (ed) *CanMus Documents, 5: Ethnomusicology in Canada* (Toronto: Institute of Canadian Music, 1990), p. 272 (this article details the ways in which musical ciphers are used to preserve texts in the memory); and 'Klawulacha' from the Kawkwiutl people of Northwestern Canada, about the Chief Wakiash and the building of the first totem pole, as collected in Natalie Curtis, *The Indians' Book: Songs and Legends of the American Indians*, reprint of second edition (New York: Dover, 1968), pp. 299-303, and the Métis song 'Mon cher amant' described in the 'Material as Archetype' section. See also Michael V. Pisani, 'I'm an Indian Too', in Jonathan Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music*

Denney; the other Canadian materials bear little obvious trace of their origins (no aspect of context sets the melodies used in the Cowell or Nancarrow settings especially apart; the latter in particular could have come from any music of close tessitura).

But the Métis/Denney setting demonstrates well Finnissy's ability to utterly transform his sources while retaining some of their essential properties. He uses Denney's rag *Chimes*, and the Métis song *Mon cher amant* as transcribed from the singing of near-forgotten Métis-Canadian singer Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte (1889-?),¹²¹ the pitches of which are used in retrograde form (with a few modifications) to replace the melody of the Denney, producing a bitonal combination that is further complicated by first a thinning-out of the bass, then the introduction of somewhat cheesy chromatic passing notes. The leaps of a fifth in the Jeannotte (a characteristic found in a wide range of French-Canadian folk songs) are quite at odds with the mostly stepwise melody of the Denney original, as are the implied drone harmonies around which the melodic elaborations are organised. Then Finnissy transposes the right hand down to A-flat minor and applies a series of random transpositions (and some other modifications, including registral displacement) to fragments of the bass, as well as changing its basic pulse so as to create a Nancarrow-esque 6:5 relationship with the treble, then extracts a partial fragment from this total result. Finally, he adds some material in the middle parts and at the conclusion, drawn from another derivation from ragtime which appears elsewhere in the cycle (Fig. 29).

(Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 250-256. Finnissy had composed an earlier piece simply entitled *Nancarrow* (1978-80), and here uses Nancarrow's *Study #31* (according to Kyle Gann, the 'only canon whose convergence point lies outside its time frame' – see Gann, *The Music of Conlon Nancarrow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 25. Gann defines the 'convergence point' as the place within a canon where all parts reach the same place in their lines (ibid. p. 21)), though with somewhat less complex polyrhythms and in four parts rather than Nancarrow's three; the use of the Native American melody modifies Nancarrow's jazz-inflected tonality to become something much harsher.

¹²¹ See Nancy Hockley, 'Transcription and vocal character: The songs of Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte', in Witmer (ed.), *Ethnomusicology in Canada*, pp. 145-151. The Métis are a native people of the Canadian and American Northwestern regions. The particular use of French in this song is described by the author as a 'Métis patois', which Finnissy notes besides the example in the sketches.



Fig. 29 (a). Homer Denney, *Chimes: A Novelty Rag*.

1. Mon cher a - mant, ma bien a - mie 2. C'est vos doux yeux cou - leurs des fleurs

3. C'est pour vous j'ai lan - gui la nuit et la jour 4. L'a mour c'est un pe - tit lan - gage

là haut 5. Qui voit son a - mant cha - grin 6. Que je meurs

de re - grèt, mais de l'en - nui sec - ret.

Fig. 29 (b). Métis song *Mon cher amant*, as sung by Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte.



Fig. 29 (c). Combination of Denney *Chimes* with transposed/retrograded *Mon cher amant*.

Allegretto (Ragtime)

6:5p 4:3p 6:5p 6:5p 6:5p 6:5p 6:5p 6:5p

6:5p 6:5p 6:5p 6:5p

l'istesso tempo (h)

melody in Tenor (marcato)

(senza rall.)

Fig. 29 (d). *North American Spirituals*, P26.

What is problematic in this chapter is the fact that, as mentioned earlier, whilst the music of 'white America', as represented in the work, traverses a wide history and develops significantly, from Billings, through Foster, Macdowell and Parker, through to Cowell, Nancarrow and East Coast serialism, the 'black' music consists almost entirely of the spirituals (unless one counts the ragtime, which makes only the briefest appearance at the very end)¹²² merely in different modifications. If one is to read it as a picture of people of African origin, as represented through their music, being forced to assimilate into varying surroundings with varying degrees of success or failure, one has to ask if such a portrayal is idealised, reified and thus dehumanising? There are of course, as I implied earlier, a wide variety of later traditions of African-American music; as Finnissy engages with different historical states of white American music, is it not equally important to do the same with the various musics of black Americans? Could this piece not be seen to accord with some primitivist stereotypes of African-Americans, perceived as incapable of developing (whether such development is for better or worse) as is portrayed possible for whites? Alternatively, does it cast African-Americans as eternal victims, whose culture is to be appropriated primarily for the purposes of constructing narratives of oppression, rather than when they have developed a more autonomous existence and culture of their own? Of course such potential objections are much easier to raise on a symbolical than a purely aural level.¹²³ The piece is already dense with information, starkly different types of musical material and processes; with the introduction of a wide range of different styles of black music it would surely collapse under the weight of its own variegation.

The sociologist Jon Cruz, in his book on the changing cultural meanings of the African-American spiritual, warns against a romanticisation of this and other forms of black music as betokening some sort of 'authentic' identity and is scathing about certain types of mainstream Americans who devoured novels like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* during periods when slavery or segregation were still in place, arguing that 'Sentimentalism allowed social crises to metamorphose through a series of symbolic substitutions that would allow one, with ease of conscience, to vehemently oppose slavery yet have no concrete sense of a slave as a human being with a face, a name, a voice'.¹²⁴ Christopher Small raises similar concerns purely within the framework of culture, arguing

¹²² One could conceivably count the Foster tunes as part of the history, despite Foster's being a white man, in line with Locke's delineation of periods. But this would be pushing a point to an extreme.

¹²³ Christopher Fox, in his article on the *History*, describes playing the *Spirituals* to a group of his MA students, giving them no prior knowledge other than the title of the piece and the composer's name, to see what allusions they discerned in it. He tells us that whilst most of the references were lost on them, they did pick up on the presence of hymns and spirituals (which is hardly surprising in the latter case as they knew the name of the piece) and that 'they were able to talk about very distinct changes of density, harmony and idiom within the music from which they were able to derive ideas about cultural plurality and conflict', as well as being aware that there were 'many different voices speaking' in the music, often at cross purposes'. Thus 'with the title as an anchor they were able to attach these musical voices to ideas about America'. See Christopher Fox, 'Michael Finnissy's History of Photography in Sound: Under the Lens', in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 143, No. 1879 (Summer 2002), p. 31. But it is not clear what exactly these 'ideas about America' were, nor are any opinions offered on the matter elsewhere in the article other than to say that the spirituals themselves come 'from a vocal, oral tradition which has connotations not only of racist oppression and exploitation but also of other music – Black American music in general and, specifically, Michael Tippett's *A child of our time*' (ibid), without considering the specific way in which the spirituals are presented, modified and contextualised by Finnissy. The comments about students' reactions are highly generalised, in such a way that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions.

¹²⁴ Jon Cruz, *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 30-31.

that 'The inability to see the power of black creativity, and the insistence on perceiving blacks simply as entertainers but nothing more is deeply ingrained in European and Euro-American society', and how 'attitudes which seem to have developed out of the continuing need to justify slavery' have led to a situation in which white people as a whole 'perceive blacks even in the most favourable light as emotionally and spiritually underdeveloped – in a word, as childlike – and not to be taken seriously either as people or as artists'.¹²⁵

In considering perceptions of blacks and other marginalized groups, Cruz suggests that a certain white sensibility 'embraces the subject (by which I mean the "topic") of black music but not the black subjects from which the music comes', thus producing 'an aestheticism that effectively disengages from any reflection on the social'.¹²⁶ This is a powerful indictment, though it is not necessarily so easy to ascertain whether the sensibilities of white listeners to black music necessarily fit such a model. Such white listeners' perspective on such music have no necessary relationship with their involvement or otherwise with progressive political activity, including that to do with fighting racism, at the same time, or even simply their attitudes in such a respect.

Spirituals became commodities for sale on the open market very soon after the end of the Civil War, both through publications and especially the work of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, established in 1865.¹²⁷ Notwithstanding some waspish disdain, this group achieved huge success in tours of the United States and then to Europe, performing before Presidents and monarchs, and audiences in the tens of thousands.¹²⁸ Dena J. Epstein, argues that in this reception, 'Instead of the grotesque stereotypes of the minstrel theater, audiences perceived a new image of black dignity, faith, and simple beauty'.¹²⁹ But not only was this to replace one patronising stereotype with another, also the credit was frequently given not the musicians but to those who had nurtured them.¹³⁰ Over a century later, on March 18th, 1990, top-earning classical divas Jessye Norman and Kathleen Battle presented a concert of spirituals to a packed Carnegie Hall.¹³¹ Arthur C. Jones writes that after hearing Kathleen Battle singing 'Over my head I hear music in the air', 'we understand immediately that with such incredibly beautiful music present, there must indeed be a God, *somewhere*'.¹³² I would ask instead whether the audience (and those who buy the recording and video afterwards) are really contemplating what the music might mean in terms of racism and responses to it today? Does such an event place such issues at a safe distance, becoming of 'then' rather than 'now'? If those listeners simply like the

¹²⁵ Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, p. 418.

¹²⁶ Cruz, *Culture on the Margins*, p. 31.

¹²⁷ J.B.T. Marsh, *The Story of the Jubilee Singers, with their Songs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), pp. 8-9.

¹²⁸ See *ibid* pp. 12-40.

¹²⁹ Dena J. Epstein, 'The Story of the Jubilee Singers: An Introduction to its Bibliographic History', in Josephine Wright (ed), *New Perspectives on Music: Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern* (Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1992), p. 151.

¹³⁰ As Epstein points out, in the first publication the songs were cited as examples of what enlightened education could achieve for former slaves (*ibid.* p. 152). This source also said that 'It is true. . . both of the words and music, that whatever modification they have undergone, has been wholly in the minds of the Singers under the influence of the training and culture they have received in the University of which they are members' (*ibid.*).

¹³¹ See Jones, *Wade in the Water*, p. 17. The concert featured these singers together with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus under James Levine, and was later released on CD and video.

¹³² Jones, *Wade in the Water*, p. 18.

sound of the music, that is fine; if claims are to be made in terms of the humane message of this music, then one must ask whether it can be indeed be seen to have had any such palpable effect upon its reception.

Such questions have also to be asked about the appropriation of the spiritual in the hands of both Tippett and Finnissey as well, in light of the explicit political allusions made by either composer. It is hard not to come away from Tippett's *A Child of our Time* without a feeling that the spirituals themselves (notwithstanding their mediated presentation) are used to represent some sort of 'authentic' or 'universal' music in contrast to the more ephemeral movements that surround them. The same could be said of Finnissey's *Folklore 2*, though this situation is mitigated both by the violence of the opening of part 3 (if the cycle is played as a whole) and the much more ambivalent and pessimistic portrayal of 'Deep River' at the end of the whole cycle.¹³³ In the *Spirituals*, however, the situation is rather more complicated. Even where clearly recognisable, the spirituals are generally portrayed in such a highly mediated form (usually with extensive harmonisation that can be quite dissonant – the moments of greater monodic lyricism are relatively short-lived, or followed by explosive moments) that it is difficult to hear them in an unequivocally affirmative manner. I suspect this was intentional on Finnissey's part, and also feel that it is important in performance not to smooth over the dissonances and disjunctures contained within for this very reason. Finnissey *does* play off the music of the spirituals against a type of modernism that developed primarily at the hands of white composers (in an interesting fashion due to the fact that he does not simply stratify the categories), but to read this piece as a celebration of authentic, warm, spiritual (in the wider sense of the term), communal black music against nasty white modernist individualism – the types of paradigms one often finds emanating from some of the New Musicologists¹³⁴ – would be woefully simplistic.

Cruz traces a process by which a song is sung first by a solitary slave, heard by an overseer or white abolitionist, remembered then transcribed, then becomes a literary text which is disseminated in new environments in which it acquires new cultural meanings. Following the various harmonisations and performances after 1865, later classical composers would take up aspects of the song, refining and taming it in the process, then it would be rediscovered by African American intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance, as well as by white cultural bohemians of the 1920s. Following further rediscovery by a liberal welfare state, then a National Recovery Act dedicated to transcribing the memories of those few former slaves still alive, it finds its way through black churches, streets and jails in the post-1945 era, becoming a social spectacle captured on the mass media. Eventually it becomes played dutifully on Public Broadcasting System during Black History Month.¹³⁵

¹³³ Of course, in performances of the second part alone, including Finnissey's own recording of just that part (Metier MSV CD 92010), this will not be the case.

¹³⁴ See for example Susan McClary's 'Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition' in *Cultural Critique* 12 (1989), pp. 57-81, or her crazily romanticised view of gospel music in *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 21-29. In fairness to McClary, it should be pointed out that she does elsewhere criticise the perception of African-Americans as having 'access to real (i.e. preindustrialized) feelings and community' (p. 55), but mostly as a rhetorical strategy for a xenophobic attack upon British rock musicians in contrast to their American counterparts.

¹³⁵ Cruz, *Culture in the Margins*, pp. 35-38. See also Andrew Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise*, pp. 404-407. For a comprehensive examination of the reception and subsequent history of the African-

Finnissy's *Folklore and North American Spirituals* come after the Norman/Battle Carnegie Hall concert, which coincided with the dutiful presentation on television during Black History Month (though with a touch of Carnegie Hall glitz added for good measure), so one might continue Cruz's (somewhat speculative) narrative from here. 'Deep River' assumes a possibly nostalgic, cathartic and dutiful role in *Folklore*, then 'Steal Away', 'Nobody knows', 'Go down, Moses' and 'By and by' are given askew presentations in *North American Spirituals*, each combined with various forms of music relating to that of white America. Finnissy tells us that he is presenting 'the voices of defiance and hope everywhere' and is 'confronting Afro-American spiritual responses to slavery' (as made explicit in the programme note cited earlier). The piece has been performed both individually and as part of the whole cycle, in particular in the country to which it itself alludes, United States, generating responses which emphasise 'a neglected churchyard, with tombs (hymns and spirituals) garlanded by ivy, their inscriptions partly effaced by lichens',¹³⁶ or as a work which 'speaks many languages, communicating in several distinct dialects almost simultaneously' whilst contrasting hallowed figures such as Billings and Ives with 'the black American tradition'¹³⁷ (whose creators no more have 'a face, a name, a voice' in this formulation than they did amongst the audiences for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* alluded to by Cruz). These responses do lay bare the potential for appropriation of such a work by certain interests. Racism, slavery, and African-American responses to these are surely about something more than 'lyricism' (in the sense that I imagine the reviewer to intend the term, appertaining to some reified notion of the 'song-like' – a quality that is certainly part of the *Spirituals* but is forever engaged in a dialogue with the other forms of alienating objectivisation of the spirituals themselves, whose very contentious nature surely calls out for aural expression) or something 'distant and rarefied'. None of the above texts engage with, or seem concerned about, the rather blatant political issues to which the piece alludes; questions of sensibilities, history, culture, appropriation, race, the primitive and the rationalistic, are reduced to idle musings based upon ossified conceptions of aestheticism and taste.

It would be grossly unfair to hold Finnissy (or those who play his work) to account in terms of whether his music could be said to do justice to the enormity of the history of slavery; rather it needs to be considered (in light of the title) in terms of its engagements with musical representations therein. Tippett's *A Child of our Time* leaves itself acutely vulnerable to the charges of idle emotional catharsis for conscience-alleviating purposes; *North American Spirituals* is not really like this, due to the lack of obviously cathartic moments. Rather, it is ultimately a deeply ambivalent piece that cannot be reduced to a simple symbolic 'message'. Much is left open, much depends on the subjective interaction of the listener in how they choose to interpret the juxtapositions and combinations of very different musics.

In its resistance of the sort of easy functionality that 'message music' provides, *North American Spirituals* could be said to fulfil absolutely what can be argued to be both

American spiritual worldwide, see John Lovell Jr., *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 402-585.

¹³⁶ Paul Griffiths, 'Greeting Ives as an Old, Familiar Friend', *New York Times*, October 17 2000. It is worth noting that on the same day as this review appeared, the American Civil Liberties Union had to file a complaint about a black American student being 'shackled, detained and repeatedly strip-searched by Immigration and Naturalization Service officials over the course of almost two days' (see <https://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/aclu-charges-abuse-case-black-us-student-shackled-and-strip-searched-immigration-o> (accessed 1/11/13)).

¹³⁷ Marilyn Nonken, programme note for CD 'American Spirituals', CD CRI CR877.

romantic¹³⁸ and modernistic criteria of autonomy and individualism. It is a piece that demands of the listener that they engage *for themselves* with the music it presents, as well as seeming to do so with its symbolic meanings as well. However, in societies in which relatively passive and disengaged listening are at least normalised are tacitly accepted on a wide scale, many listeners may stay away from this type of music (unless performance strategies conspire to turn it into some self-contained, closed form which can be consumed more easily, so as to fulfil the criteria of aestheticism and entertainment). This is the paradoxical situation that Adorno identified in one of his most brilliant dialectical formulations (here relating to Expressionism, but applicable to other aesthetic approaches as well):

As long as art holds its distance from immediate life, it is unable to spring beyond the shadow of its own autonomy and immanence of form. Expressionism, hostile to the “work” as such, is, in spite of this hostility, able to spring beyond itself even less, exactly because in its rejection of communication it insists upon an autonomy that can only be made good by the consistency of “works of art.” It is this ineluctable contradiction that prohibits persevering at the expressionist summit.¹³⁹

Thus Finnissy has perhaps embarked upon an impossible task in trying to communicate a progressive political message through *North American Spirituals*. It would be rash to suggest that music could play a major role in effecting societal transformation – no-one would surely ever suggest that performances of *North American Spirituals* would diminish racism or poverty as affect African-Americans – but it is not out of the question that it can be appropriated in such a manner as to have negative consequences. As a confrontational piece that just might shake up an audience (especially an American audience) from complacent certainties concerning peoples, their musics, and their representations and traces in ‘classical’ idioms, it could be powerful; as an espousal of the supposed ability of art and aestheticism to transcend such things, in the manner described in some of the above reception, its function would be considerably more dubious. Even as the former type of piece, though, the ‘message’ is somewhat compromised by the unequal treatment it itself accords black and white musics.

If the spirituals to which Finnissy alludes were relatively obscure and as such unlikely to be recognised by typical audiences for his music, then it would be possible to view the work as ‘absolute music’ (though even then I am doubtful). But they are not and it is not. Finnissy makes a valiant attempt at a near-impossible task (in what I believe to be the most contentious chapter of the whole *History*), avoiding the easy pitfalls of romanticisation and fetishisation of the spiritual to an admirable degree. Whilst the piece could not really be said to engage critically with the recent reduction of the spiritual to a commodity form (that would require a quite different type of approach such as that attempted in some of the *Re-Visionen* cycle of Dieter Schnebel or Helmut Lachenmann’s Mozart-derived clarinet concerto *Accanto*), nonetheless it manages to navigate itself away from simply using such a form in a naïve manner. Thus he is able to produce a genuinely searching aural exploration of the varying cultural meanings of such iconic music by virtue of different appropriations (never simply reiterating the iconic form in a passive

¹³⁸ In the sense of early romantic aesthetics of musical autonomy, rather than with reference to romanticisation in the manner I used the term above.

¹³⁹ Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 42.

manner), on a formal level as well as that of particular musical materials. This is no small achievement despite all the possible objections I have raised above.

Chapter 4: *My parents' generation thought War meant something*

Whilst the fourth chapter of the *History* is not strictly autobiographical, and alludes to the *generation* of people to which his parents belonged rather than so much his parents themselves,¹⁴⁰ it is certainly informed by his memories of and perspectives on that decade, including the music that his parents would have encountered during their early years of adulthood. Its initial inspiration came from photographs that Finnissy was shown by his parent, of their wartime experiences during the London Blitz, in which German bombers caused the deaths of over 30 000 people in the city and flattened large swathes of houses. Both of Finnissy's parents served in the British Army during the war, though neither were actually involved in combat. His father was involved in radar work, in the process developing a range of skills that enabled him to build radios after the war was over (Finnissy recalls that the family never once had to buy a radio).¹⁴¹ His mother was a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS), a women's branch of the army attached to the Territorial Army. They were married in 1945 and Finnissy was conceived soon afterwards.

Post-war Britain was characterised by a simultaneous combination of optimism and austerity.¹⁴² Despite victory in the war, the British people voted not for wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill (perhaps because of recent memories of the dreadful poverty which had been exacerbated by the policies of Conservative-dominated governments in the 1930s) but for his Labour rival Clement Attlee, whose government is widely regarded on the left to have enacted some of the most progressive policies in the history of the country.¹⁴³ That country of which Attlee and his party took control was in a dire financial situation in the aftermath of the war. National debt had tripled whilst Britain had lost its previously dominant international trading position. Britain's involvement in the post-war occupation of Germany was a further drain upon resources. At first the Americans were reluctant to help, still seeing Britain as a rival trading power, but a meagre loan was negotiated by none other than the economist John Maynard

¹⁴⁰ In private conversations with the author.

¹⁴¹ Private conversations with the author.

¹⁴² The outline of post-war Britain presented here is indebted to several sources in particular: Alan Sked and Chris Cook, *Post-War Britain: A Political History*, fourth edition (London: Penguin, 1995), especially pp. 23-87; Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, fourth edition (London: Penguin, 2003), especially the chapter 'The Culture of Austerity', pp. 52-72; Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Paul Addison, *Now the War is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-51* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985); Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain 1945-1951* (London: Vintage, 1993); Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); David Childs, *Britain since 1939: Progress and Decline*, second edition (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, *The Labour Party: A Marxist History* (London: Bookmarks, 1988), as well as the books on London cited separately.

¹⁴³ Of course this is a moderate rather than far left view. For a different perspective, see 'The Attlee Government: Zenith of Reformism' in Cliff and Gluckstein, *The Labour Party: A Marxist History*, pp. 218-255. Their concluding view is that 'Attlee's government had not ushered in socialism. Its real triumph lay in its steering of British capitalism through a period of stress in the aftermath of the Second World War and in assisting the USA to stabilise capitalism the world over.' (p. 255).

Keynes, not long before his death in 1946. Combined with a further loan from Canada, the government believed they could achieve economic recovery by 1951. However, this was not to be.

Nonetheless, the new government was able to implement a startling range of socialistic policies, including multiple nationalisations, the creation of the welfare state through the National Insurance Act of 1946, and the National Health Service in the same year, as well as free education for all until age 15, and the beginning of the dismantling of the British Empire. In London, the aftermath of the wartime Blitz necessitated major repair and rebuilding work,¹⁴⁴ and a group of young architects inspired by the ideas of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, and sympathetic to the Labour government, were able to gain positions of influence, and make grand plans for the rebuilding of the city, though many of these foundered because of the expenditure involved.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, some modernist projects well-regarded by architectural critics such as the borough of Harlow in Essex, planned by the then-young British modernist Frederick Gibberd, were able to go ahead,¹⁴⁶ leading to the growth in prominence of a school which became known as the 'New Brutalism' style, which would later become the target of ferocious attacks.¹⁴⁷

Most of the repair work upon houses in the capital was completed between 1944 and 1947, with local newspapers publishing lists of numbers of repairs completed each week.¹⁴⁸ The government kept strict control over supplies of building materials, restricting in large measure the construction of new offices. Thus emerged a black market in building licenses.¹⁴⁹ It was the job of George Finnissy, Michael's father, to photograph the processes of redevelopment and repair for the archives of the then London County Council (LCC).¹⁵⁰ He rapidly became aware of the cheapness and corruption that was entailed in the whole venture and ultimately quit the job in disgust. His photographs, which would be unattributed, may languish somewhere in LCC archives.

The optimism generated by the Labour government, even during a time of austerity, did not last, however, and was damaged above all by a fuel crisis during a freak winter in early 1947. With financial resources at a low, Britain needed to rely upon the Marshal Plan to save the country from bankruptcy, necessitating commitments to free trade, European economic integration and generally to a capitalist economy based upon private ownership. Further international pressures forced devaluation of the pound and severe cuts in public spending, with the military being brought in to break strikes. In this context, the besieged government won the 1950 general election by a majority of only five seats and had to call a further election the next year, which they lost to the Conservatives, who would remain in power for the next thirteen years.

¹⁴⁴ See Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and its People* (London: Viking, 2001), p. 42.

¹⁴⁵ Maureen Waller, *London 1945: Life in the Debris of War* (London: Murray, 2004), p. 443-451; Marwick, 'Rebuilding and Redesigning Britain' in *Culture in Britain since 1945*, pp. 50-55.

¹⁴⁶ See Marwick, 'Rebuilding and Redesigning Britain', p. 51.

¹⁴⁷ See Anthony Jackson, *The Politics of Architecture: A History of Modern Architecture in Britain* (London: The Architectural Press, 1970), p. 183, cited in Marwick, 'Rebuilding and Redesigning Britain', pp. 54-55.

¹⁴⁸ See Waller, *London 1945*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁹ White, *London*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁵⁰ This body ran from 1889 to 1965, when it was replaced by the Greater London Council, itself abolished in 1986 by the Thatcher government as part of a wider attack upon local government, often run by left-wing councils. In 2000, a new body, the Greater London Authority, was set up. See Andrew Saint (ed), *Politics and the People of London: The London County Council 1889-1965* (London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1989), for more details on the history of the organisation.

These were the years in which Finnissy would have been first conscious of the world, this was the environment that would have coloured his first memories, and these events created the foundations for the later post-war society in which he came of age. In such a context, it would be natural to ask 'what the war was fought for'? Britain and the world seemed on the verge of further conflict, with the new spectre of the atom bomb and prospect of mass annihilation (the Berlin blockade of 1948 did indeed bring the world to the brink of a third world war,¹⁵¹ and this possibility was even greater during the later Cuban Missile Crisis). The austerity, wage restraint and rationing of the post-war world were obvious to all, Britain remained a deeply class-bound society with limited opportunities for upward mobility, homosexuality remained illegal, the nation remained provincial in outlook, defensive as ever against European cultural influences, and more widely the whole country was forced to pander to the wishes and interests of the new superpower of the United States.

To read *My parents' generation* simply as a parable of the horror of war is only to scratch the surface of the work; whilst the musical symbols are relatively clear in this respect, it stands equally as a reflection on popular culture, its role as 'distraction', and even upon the continuing fate of a world built upon the ashes of the Second World War. It is in some ways the bleakest of all the pieces in the *History*, yet has a very distinctive passion of its own.

Two principal categories of material are used in the chapter: songs associated with war of various periods (from the nineteenth century through to the Soviet era), and imaginary popular songs relating to those from the 1930s and 1940s. The materials belonging to the latter category (sometimes overlapping with the former) do not as a whole constitute direct references or allusions, but rather abstractions prominently featuring generalised characteristics of the music of the period – syncopations, obsessively reiterated rhythms (especially dotted rhythms), stepwise melodies which are easy to sing, booming and incessant bass lines, sometimes extravagant but rather cheesy harmonies (with ample use of dominant ninths), and so on. Finnissy has suggested that some of the figures he had in mind when writing this sort of music included Jerome Kern (whose 'Can't Help But Lovin' Dat Man' he had earlier set in a piano piece of 1990), George Gershwin, Cole Porter and Harold Arlen (famous for 'Stormy Weather'), all of whose songs dominated the Swing Era, and the British bandleader and violinist Bert Ambrose (known at the time simply as 'Ambrose'), who 'discovered' and frequently performed with the infamous singer Vera Lynn.¹⁵²

Many popular songs were associated with different periods of the second world war, an early hit being 'The Beer Barrel Polka/Roll Out the Barrel', followed in the first winter of the war by 'Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye' and the notorious 'We'll Meet Again', September 1940, the time of the Blitz, bringing 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square' and 'The Last Time I Saw Paris', then in 1941 'Bless 'Em All' and 'The White Cliffs of Dover'.¹⁵³ Later years saw, quite amazingly, a great popularity for the song 'Lili Marlene',¹⁵⁴ which British soldiers had first heard broadcast on Belgrade Radio in

¹⁵¹ See Sked and Cook, *Post-War Britain*, p. 75.

¹⁵² Private conversations with the author.

¹⁵³ Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then: A history of everyday life during the Second World War* (London: Arrow Books, 1971), pp. 415-416.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 417.

Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁵ There were even occasions on which allied airmen sung some English-language versions of Soviet war songs, as collected in a volume entitled *Songs of the People* (which included 'The Red Airmen's Song', 'The Red Flag' and the French revolutionary song 'Carmagnole').¹⁵⁶

Dancing was hugely popular in Britain during the war years. Ballrooms were opened all over the country, the most celebrated in London being the Hammersmith Palais, which was regularly full.¹⁵⁷ The whole phenomenon of 'mass entertainment' grew to new dimensions as a distraction from fear and hardship, the ballrooms remembered as 'fun palaces for the people where the soft lights and the sweet music could banish reality for a few brief hours and allow dreams and fantasies to flourish'.¹⁵⁸ Classical venues were taken over and used as dance halls, including the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, of which Frank E. Huggett has argued:

The transformation of opera house into dance hall was symbolic of the wartime change of values. Even if it had been possible to mount lavish and expensive spectacles for a cultural minority, it would have been politically unacceptable in wartime Britain. Although there were many exceptions and anomalies, the British fought a public war in which all people were expected to share, and to show, their sufferings.¹⁵⁹

It may be the case that the widening of the high/low culture divide in Britain, and the consequent distrust towards many forms of culture perceived as 'elitist', has deep roots in the values of this era.

Finnissy has engaged with popular and commercial musical genres in a number of works, whilst at the same time employing compositional techniques which would be impossible without the lessons of modernist abstraction. To find some unity between these distinct necessities is by no means easy; a simple desire to demonstrate empathy with the cultural desires of others does not sit easily with suspicions and reservations about the sentimentality or anonymity of some popular culture, the very things in reaction to which it has been argued that modernism developed.¹⁶⁰

Behind the conception of *My parents' generation* surely stands another artistic figure for whom Finnissy has great admiration, the writer and television dramatist Dennis Potter.¹⁶¹ Potter's two extended masterpieces, *Pennies from Heaven* (1978) and *The Singing Detective* (1986) became notorious for their use of characters lip-synching

¹⁵⁵ On the history and appropriations of this song, see Liel Leibovitz and Matthew Miller, *Lili Marlene: The Soldiers' Song of World War II* (New York: Norton, 2009).

¹⁵⁶ See Brian Murdoch, *Fighting Songs and Warring Words* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p. 207.

¹⁵⁷ Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, p. 418 and Huggett, *Goodnight Sweetheart*, pp. 26-28.

¹⁵⁸ Frank E. Huggett, *Goodnight Sweetheart: Songs and Memories of the Second World War* (London: W.H. Allen, 1979), p. 26.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 85.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other', in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 44-62, for one elaboration of such an argument and John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992) for a much more populist rendition of similar arguments. Carl Dahlhaus, however, argues that the opposite of the category he defines as 'trivial music' 'is not "modern" but "classical" music' (Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 314).

¹⁶¹ Finnissy mentions Potter in 'Conversations with Michael Finnissy', p. 6, and refers to his work often in private conversations.

popular songs from the 1930s and 1940s respectively (in the former case, the drama was set entirely during this period). In distinction to the more conventional device of a character 'breaking out into song' to express a particular emotion in musicals and operas, Potter's use of song was often ironic or sardonic, a way of situating the drama within the archetypes of a period (and sometimes entering into a dialectical engagement with such archetypes). Often songs such by men would be lip-synched by woman and vice versa, all to emphasise the artificial nature of the device, whilst the context of the drama could be used to radically change other assumed meanings of the songs.¹⁶²

The use of cultural artefacts from a particular period, presented with a degree of critical detachment, of course informs a significant amount of Finnissy's work, and Potter may be one of the most significant influences on him in this respect. Whilst Potter will cite a whole song unmodified (in an aural sense; the context is of course radically his own), Finnissy's allusions are rarely in the form of direct quotation¹⁶³ and are often oblique, 'feeding' the music in terms of lending it certain attributes rather than presenting something directly identifiable. Potter uses, for example, Ray Noble's 'Love is the Sweetest Thing' in *Pennies from Heaven*, to accompany the adulterous anti-hero Arthur Parker's sordid sexual encounter on the floor with his lover Ellen; the camera moves to make the couple appear as if on the cover of the sheet music of the song, which is then opened to focus on the pages themselves. A hand returns back to the cover page and we see Arthur's abandoned wife Joan in the same picture slot. In Finnissy's 'A foggy day in London town', from his *Gershwin Arrangements*, the composer incorporates a tension between the Gershwin melody and the other parts continuously within the piece (the accompaniment frequently presenting antagonistic harmonies to those implied by the melody, and developing contrapuntal lines which enmesh with the latter), which parallels Potter's process and reflects Finnissy's knowledge that for many listeners to Gershwin's 1937 song, written at the tail end of the Great Depression, London was a city to which many people trekked in the hope of finding work and escaping unspeakable poverty (hopes which were frequently thwarted).

The six sections of *My parents' generation* are each announced by a short B-flat minor incipit deriving from Debussy's *Berceuse héroïque* (Fig. 30). This work was written in 1914 and published in the volume *King Albert's Book*,¹⁶⁴ intended to offer 'a tribute of admiration to Belgium, on the heroic and ever-memorable share she has taken in the war'.¹⁶⁵ Debussy should not be viewed as a liberal pacifist; he had very early on in the war

¹⁶² John R. Cook describes, in the context of *Pennies from Heaven*, the use of the popular music of the thirties so as to encapsulate 'the reality of Depression-hit Britain, in relation to which the romantic hopes and dreams expressed in the songs seemed to function as some kind of necessary antidote' and the 'gulf between the poverty of most working lives and the richness of the aspirations expressed through the music'. See Cook, *Dennis Potter: A Life on Screen* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 163.

¹⁶³ The major exception to this is found in the later books of the revised *Verdi Transcriptions* (completed 2005); the last piece in particular, a transcription from Verdi's Requiem, constitutes one of the most 'literal' transcriptions Finnissy has composed (albeit still with some small distortions).

¹⁶⁴ *King Albert's Book: A Tribute to the Belgian King and People from Representative Men and Women throughout the World* (London: Daily Telegraph, 1914). See Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through The Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 38-40, for more details.

¹⁶⁵ François Lesure and Roger Nichols (ed), *Debussy Letters*, translated Roger Nichols (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 295 n2.

expressed typical nationalistic sentiments which also drew upon musical rivalries.¹⁶⁶ But he soon found himself disturbed by the course the war was taking, and mostly unable to compose or concentrate on music.¹⁶⁷ Of the *Berceuse*, he wrote 'it's the best I could do, feeling the continued proximity of hostilities as a physical restraint. Added to which there's my military inferiority – I wouldn't know how to use a gun'.¹⁶⁸ The work is a hushed, melancholy march at a moderate tempo that precludes its being heard either as obviously triumphal or funereal (a march forever haunted by the spectre of death rather than a funeral march), with what Charles-Henry Combe identifies as an obstinate repetition between tonic and dominant.¹⁶⁹ Debussy counters a yearning, *expressif* melody in chords with the sound of distant bugles in the remote key of F (set against E-flat minor in the bass), a type of mimetic allusion Debussy had previously employed when quoting *La marseillaise* in 'Feux d'artifice', from the second book of *Preludes* (1910-1913).¹⁷⁰ The central section contains a deceptively comforting allusion to the Belgian national anthem, *La brabaçonne*.

Finnissy derives each of his incipits from a straight quotation from the first eight bars of the Debussy piece, but in such a way that the ending of one overlaps with the beginning of the next (as he also does, more obviously, at the beginning of *Muybridge-Munch*), also reducing the length by one crochet each time. His tempo has the same metronome mark as Debussy's, though the transplantation of the expressive indication *grave et soutenu* to the position of the tempo marking suggests a more funereal interpretation of the material than might be provided by the original *Modéré (sans lentueur)*. The introduction of triplet modifications in the later incipits slightly alleviates the march-like quality.

¹⁶⁶ Debussy wrote in a letter to his piano pupil Nicolas Coronio in September 1914 of 'German barbarity' which had 'exceeded all expectations', that the Germans 'even found it convenient not to distinguish between brutishness and intellectualism', as well as that 'we are going to pay dearly for the right to dislike the music of Richard Strauss and Schoenberg' and that 'French art needs to take revenge quite as seriously as the French army does!', and even drawing upon metaphors involving Joan of Arc to symbolise French music being overrun by that from Germany. See Lesure and Nichols (eds), *Debussy Letters*, pp. 292-293. Original in François Lesure (ed), *Claude Debussy: Correspondance 1884-1918* (Paris, Hermann, 1993). See also Roger Nicholls, *The Life of Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 152. For contrasting views on Debussy's artistic nationalism, see Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy: His Life and Mind* (London: Cassell, 1962/1965), volume two, pp. 205-206, and Déirdre Donnelon, 'Debussy as musician and critic', in Simon Trezise (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 55-56.

¹⁶⁷ See Lesure (ed), *Correspondance*, p. 346-348. Debussy also said that the very 'familiar sound' of the piano had become 'odious' to him. See Lesure, *Claude Debussy: Biographe critique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), p. 389.

¹⁶⁸ Letter of January 1 1915, in Lesure and Nichols (eds), *Debussy Letters*, pp. 294-295.

¹⁶⁹ See Charles-Henry Combe, 'Les citations d'hymnes nationaux chez Debussy', *Revue Musicale de Suisse Romande* No. 1 (March 1986), p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ Debussy was to employ such devices with even more intricacy the following year in *En blanc et noir* (1915). See Frank Dawes, *Debussy Piano Music* (London, Reading and Fakenham: Cox and Wyman, 1969), pp. 55-56 for a perceptive if brief description of this; also see Combe, 'Les citations', pp. 23-27.



Fig. 30. Debussy, *Berceuse héroïque*, opening.

Then the work is divided into a six-part structure, the beginning of each section signalled by the Debussy-based incipit, just as the Billings/spirituals material served a similar role in the *Spirituals*.

A: Reminiscences, in modified form, of passages from the *Spirituals* – Billings/spirituals combinations, Nancarrow. Glimpses of combined popular songs. Fragmented material. ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’.

B: After short continuation of A, long *pppppp* passage combining pop songs material with Mozart minuets and material from the later *Sizilianische Männerakte*.

C: Meandering fragments, eventually coalescing into the first proper mock pop song. Sudden explosion into ‘compression’ material. More fragmentation, blank. First glimpses of ‘Whatever You Are’ – Sullivan.

D: Soviet war song ‘Sacred War’ combined with Liszt’s *La lugubre gondola I*, the latter giving way to ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’, this time more aggressively. Uncertain combination of various materials – anticipations of the *Poets*, pop songs, more sustained passages from *Sizilianische Männerakte*. Sudden shift to extended passage of pointillistic material.

E: Second mock pop song, with obsessive dotted rhythms. Expanding into manic, violent extension, then continuation with hands reversed. Second passage of pointillistic material. Further anticipation of the *Poets*, intermingled with 'Onward Christian Soldiers' again.

F: Extremely depressive opening section, built upon Arthur Sullivan – 'Whatever you are'. Interjections with material from *Poets*. Third pointillistic section, then long passage from *Sizilianische Männerakte*.

From the first section onwards, Finnissy eases his material in gradually, in a fragmented manner, not really achieving any degree of continuity right up until the end of the section. The effect is one of distant, fragmentary, hazy memories. Much of the material can be characterised as a type of 'abstract war song' derived in part from Arthur Sullivan's 1871 hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' (well-known to most of those raised in the Church of England), into which mould Finnissy is able to adopt various of the Billings/spirituals material from earlier (with a different arrangement of voices, equal dynamics, and a modified tempo), whilst adding some jarring dissonant pitches. He also repeats variations on other archetypal figures through the section, but which rarely move in any particular direction.

Above all, the presence of dotted rhythms identifies a category of material drawn from various sources, just as the introduction of syncopation and certain harmonies (especially those featuring dominant ninths) signal a move towards the other primary category of (popular) musical material, especially in the form of inserts of pairs of material in similar treble registers (see Fig. 31).



Fig. 31. Some of Finnissy's gamut of cells from imaginary 1940s popular music material.

The only direct allusion to the Debussy other than the incipits comes through Debussy's own allusion to the Belgian national anthem, *La brabançonne* (Fig. 32), written at the time of the Belgian Revolution in 1830.¹⁷¹ Debussy's initially calm (though also 'proud') arrangement, which supplants the reiterated tonic of the original with a richer progression in the first phrase, then adds a descending and darkening chromatic progression in the second, provides a startling recontextualisation of this incessant and

¹⁷¹ The text of this was written by Alexandre Dechet and the music by François van Campenhout. See <http://www.arquebusiers.be/brabanconne.htm> (accessed 2/11/13).

militaristic song, perhaps with a degree of bitter irony in light of the events in Belgium at the time the piece was written.¹⁷² Finnissey sets the theme as *marcato* rather than *Plus calme*, restoring some of its militarism, and supplants Debussy's harmonies with his own doublings of the melodic line, as well as some rhythmic modifications, all of this serves to subvert the sense of growth and harmonic progression (thus lending the music both a more fatalistic and abstracted quality).



Fig. 32. *La brabançonne*, by Alexandre Dechet and François Van Campenhout.¹⁷³

Another key motive in this chapter is taken from the quartet 'Whatever you are' from Act 2 of Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *Utopia Limited* (1892-93) (Fig. 33), a little-performed satire on companies, the Royal Navy and colonial deference. The characters sing in praise of unmediated human nature as against art, learning and civilisation. Finnissey uses this song in its extended form in Section F (very much slowed down and surrounded by other material), but for earlier occurrences (and also for use elsewhere in the cycle) he transforms the chorus into a 4/4 metre, somewhat more akin to a 30s or 40s popular song, with syncopations and modifications of the triplet quavers of the Sullivan into recurring pairs of notes.

¹⁷² Though of course it could also be interpreted as an understated musical representation of the descent of a beloved country into the site of killing fields. Debussy wrote to Robert Godet that 'the *Brabançonne*' stirs no heroic thoughts in the breasts of those who weren't brought up with it' (Letter of January 1 1915, in Lesure and Nicholls (ed), *Debussy Letters*, p. 295). Dawes argues similarly that the melody 'apparently and understandably aroused in him less intensely patriotic emotions than it would in a Belgian. Out-of-tune, distant bugle-calls create a bitonal element' (Dawes, *Debussy Piano Music*, p. 55). Combe speaks of 'a great hope, a deep breath of fresh air...but which only lasts for an instant'. Whatever, the iconic nature of the theme makes interpretation in terms of wider 'meanings' more palpable than would be the case with original material.

¹⁷³ This version is taken from <http://david.national-anthems.net/be.htm> (accessed 2/11/13).



Fig. 33. Arthur Sullivan, from 'Whatever you are', from *Utopia Limited*.

Both of the more extended 'popular songs' (in Sections C and E) emerge not so much out of the preceding material (which in both cases is relatively aimless), but as an alternative to it – a means to alleviate boredom and depression in the manner of mass culture. The songs themselves once more derive from abstracted archetypes (syncopated ascending figures in the first, dotted rhythms around accented notes in the second), configured in certain manners (for example with a Cole Porter-like booming bass in the first case). Neither have much possibility of direction (despite some by-now relatively routine processes of fragmentation), so Finnissy can only effect the first of several major 'compressions' in the cycle (allusions to such material in the first two chapters had more of a referential character than appearing to be any consequence of the surrounding material). Here the process is facilitated by the very use of archetypes, creating virtuosic but also rather coruscating musical explosions, shaking up the listener's attention with unpredicted violence. Equally violent in a different way are the extended sections in which Finnissy dissolves the material into abstracted gestures and pointillism (referred to simply as 'pointillism' in the outline of the structure above), which will also occur in *Unsere Afrikareise* and briefly in *Wachtend*.

Elsewhere, Finnissy is able to temper the banal major melody, pedestrian harmonies and bloated and pompous march rhythms¹⁷⁴ of the Soviet Second World War song 'Sacred War'¹⁷⁵ (see Fig. 3 (b)) by the use of an accompaniment prominently featuring flattened thirds and sixths, as a signifier of death such as can be found in Liszt's *La Lugubre Gondola I* (Fig. 34) (a technique he had used in the earlier 'They're writing songs of love, but not for me' in the *Gershwin Arrangements*). He brings this war song together with both 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and the American First World War song 'Pack up your troubles in your Old Kit Bag', all in different keys, to create an illusion of chaos and carnage, with 'Onward Christian Soldiers' set at a markedly louder dynamic than the other songs. When asked about his own use of religiously derived musical material, Finnissy drew attention to how 'In Lindsay Anderson's film *If...* hymn singing has definite connotations, which he exploits quite wonderfully – it's criticism and not nostalgia'.¹⁷⁶ This film, in which the link between religion and militarism is made explicit (the Chaplain also commands the school army cadets and in one sequence we see him first in the pulpit, speaking of the arch-sin of 'Desertion' in the sense of deserting God, then on horseback in full military uniform – desertion is of course an arch-crime in the army as well), was surely in Finnissy's mind when writing this part of the piece, in which a Christian hymn nearly drowns other songs explicitly relating to war.



Fig. 34. Franz Liszt, *La Lugubre Gondola I*.

My parents' generation was also written in the wake of the death of Finnissy's mother and is dedicated to her memory; in this context he was sure to have been aware of the following passage from Barthes' *Camera Lucida*:

In the Mother, there was a radiant, irreducible core: my mother. It is always maintained that I should suffer more because I have spent my whole life with her; but my suffering proceeds from

¹⁷⁴ A whole genre of Soviet war songs were of this nature, described in Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1972), p. 180. Schwarz writes of a song called *Sacred War*, again with text by Lebedev-Kumach, which he describes as an 'emblem of the Great War', but this apparently was in 'stately three-four time' (p. 181) and the music was written by Alexander Alexandrov, so almost certainly is a different song. See also Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: The Red Army 1939-45* (London: Faber & Faber, 200), pp. 169-170.

¹⁷⁵ The song can be found in Kotlyarov (ed), *Six Soviet War Songs*.

¹⁷⁶ 'Conversations with Michael Finnissy', pp. 22-23.

who she was; and it is because she was who she was that I lived with her. To the Mother-as-Good, she had added that grace of being an individual soul. I might say, like the Proustian Narrator at his grandmother's death: "I did not insist only upon suffering, but upon respecting the originality of my suffering"; for this originality was the reflection of what was absolutely irreducible in her, and thereby lost forever. It is said that mourning, by its gradual labor, slowly erases pain; I could not, I cannot believe this, because for me, Time eliminates the emotion of loss (I do not weep), that is all. For the rest, everything has remained motionless. For what I have lost is not a Figure (the Mother), but a being; and not a being, but a quality (a soul): not the indispensable, but the irreplaceable. I could live without the Mother (as we all do, sooner or later); but what life remained would be absolutely and entirely unqualifiable (without quality).¹⁷⁷

What is lost is not just a Figure, nor even just a being, but also a link to an earlier world, a time of hope and possibility in the aftermath of calamitous world events. Finnissey was born into that aftermath, but was too young to know from first-hand experience the context from which they emerged – his parents provided that link. Barthes was haunted by a photograph he found of his mother as a child, standing with her brother in the Winter Garden (the house where she was born in Chennevières-sur-Marne), the two united by their parents' imminent divorce.¹⁷⁸ He described how:

[T]his Winter Garden Photograph was for me like the last music Schumann wrote before collapsing, that first *Gesang der Frühe* which accords with both my mother's being and my grief at her death; I could not express this accord except by an infinite series of adjectives, which I omit, convinced however that this photograph collected all the possible predicates from which my mother's being was constituted and whose suppression or partial alteration, conversely, had sent me back to these photographs of her which had left me so unsatisfied. These same photographs, which phenomenology would call "ordinary" objects, were merely analogical, provoking only her identity, not her truth; but the Winter Garden Photograph was indeed essential, it achieved for me, utopically, *the impossible science of the unique being*.¹⁷⁹

And so Finnissey expresses his own grief from 'all the possible predicates' from which his own mother's 'being was constituted', those things themselves suppressed or partially altered which send him back to these other musical photographs that are ultimately unsatisfying. Perhaps Finnissey searches for the musical equivalent of the photograph in the Winter Garden, but does not seem to find it; therein lies the tragedy of the piece.

Yet the search is nonetheless a telling experience. From the outset of the work we are plunged into a somewhat seedy world of half-remembered war songs and popular music (performing a similar function to Debussy's bugle calls) within an overall framework provided by the melancholy ongoing march of the Debussy and the Billings/spirituals. These latter provide a semblance of continuity despite the excursions into worlds of sentimentality, fantasy and violence, creating a structure strongly reminiscent of Potter's dramas, as with the protagonist's being brought back to the reality of his hospital bed in *The Singing Detective* after his *noir*-ish constructions in his mind of worlds of intrigue and espionage, or the drab routine of day-to-day work in the British Government Intelligence Office in the later *Lipstick on Your Collar* (1993), alleviated by sexualised fantasies by most of those who work there, in order to pass the time. This type

¹⁷⁷ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 75.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 67-69.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 70-71.

of device conveys the sense of hopelessness and futility that pervades the music. Yet a certain sense of distance is created by the fact that the 'host' material (Debussy/Billings/spirituals) impresses itself upon the listener as archaic, notwithstanding its mediated form (in this sense the work is closer to *Lipstick* or *Pennies* than *The Singing Detective*, as the 'host' settings of the former two are themselves archaic). If it were a more obviously 'contemporary' sounding material used here, the arching nature of the contrasts might be utterly unbearable. In this way Finnissy sets the work at a certain distance from more directly autobiographical concerns.

If Finnissy does not find the Winter Garden photograph, nor the experiences suddenly made crystal clear to Proust when bending over to undo his boots¹⁸⁰ or tasting the madeleine cake, what exactly does he discover? I would suggest that he comes closer to illuminating something of the conflicting but intertwined forces of militarism and populism that characterised the pre-war era and whose continuation into the post-war period were one of the factors that mitigated against the dreams of 1945 ultimately being realised in full. And perhaps the most significant element is the interaction with mass-produced popular culture.

A range of writers and thinkers have traced transformations in popular music since the nineteenth century, especially in terms of its relationship to industrialisation and mass production; Carl Dahlhaus distinguished what he calls 'trivial music' from 'functional music' and 'entertainment music', so that the trivial 'remains within the narrowest confines of convention at the same time that it tries to appear as a spontaneous outpouring of feeling'.¹⁸¹ Theodor Adorno diagnosed 'pseudo-individualisation', which he defined as the endowment of cultural mass production 'with the halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself', a standardization that 'is so rigid that the freedom it allows for any sort of improvisation is severely delimited'. The 'necessity of merely melodically circumscribing the same underlying harmonic functions' meant that 'stereotyping of improvisatory details speedily occurred',¹⁸² whilst Adorno here and elsewhere describes similar processes with respect to rhythm. In particular he argued scathingly that such music served fundamentally to distract listeners from the demands of reality and reinforces a condition of inattention.¹⁸³ Richard Hoggart, writing in 1957, contrasted new trends in popular songs coming from America with older forms of working class song; whilst recognising the potential for nostalgic idealisation of the latter, he still saw in the former a high degree of standardisation, sentimentality, and appeal to a restricted and familiar range of emotions.¹⁸⁴ All three writers to differing degrees identify a marked change in the cultural artefact due to the relatively anonymous nature of mass

¹⁸⁰ See Patrizia Lombardo, *The Three Paradoxes of Roland Barthes* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1989), pp. 131-132 for more on this parallel between Proust and Barthes.

¹⁸¹ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 311-320.

¹⁸² Theodor Adorno, 'On Popular Music', in Adorno, *Essays on Music*, edited Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 445. Adorno's views on jazz and popular music are one of the most contentious areas of his output. For a defence of this work, pointing out in particular the huge difference between what Adorno would have heard in Weimar Germany and what we now understand by the term, see J. Bradford Robinson, 'The Jazz Essays of Theodor Adorno: Some Thoughts on Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany', in *Popular Music*, Vol. 13 No. 1 (Jan 1994), pp. 1-25.

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 458. For a more recent view on adverts and consumer society employing similar paradigms, see John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 129-154.

¹⁸⁴ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Pelican, 1958), pp. 151-163.

production and the division of labour, a paradigm commonly inherited from Marxist thinking on the nature of industrial capitalism.

But in recent decades, in English-speaking cultural studies there has been a marked shift away from the above paradigms towards a full-on celebration of the most mass-produced and commercialised popular culture, with often extravagant claims made for its supposedly emancipatory, egalitarian and 'subversive' potential.¹⁸⁵ Many of these writers argue specifically for the superior virtue of the mass-produced as against that often valued in terms of individual distinctiveness and sophistication,¹⁸⁶ though some other writers, such as Jon Savage or Ben Watson,¹⁸⁷ have concentrated on the sometimes complex relationship between popular musicians and the industry that underwrites and constrains their activities.

Potter presented a somewhat more ambivalent view, describing how in *Pennies from Heaven*, he 'wanted to write something about the resilience of human dreams' wanting the plays ultimately to communicate 'that the songs are only diminished version of the oldest myth of all in the Garden of Eden',¹⁸⁸ going on to say in a later interview with the *Observer* that:

There is some sense in which you can actually assume the ultimate optimism, no matter the degradation, the miseries that the world inflicts on you. The final claim is that it doesn't matter – it matters in your ligaments, your emotions, your betrayals – but that there is some sense of order, a rationality that is sheer optimism.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Examples of this are too numerous to detail in full. In music this can be found in the work of Susan McClary, Philip Brett, Georgina Born (see various essays in Born and David Hesmondhalgh (eds), *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000)), or in the rather macho tone of Dai Griffiths' 'On Grammar Schoolboy Music' (in Derek B. Scott, *Music, Culture and Society: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 143-145). McClary's enchantment with the culture industry is encapsulated in passages such as where she says that the Silvertones 'gladly make use of' various musical and technical devices, but also 'the commercial networks afforded by radio, commercial promoters, and the recording industry', and that 'they see commercial distribution as a way of getting the word out to an even larger community – and a way out of the crushing conditions of coal mining' (McClary, *Conventional Wisdom* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 28). McClary paints a picture by which the commercial networks serve merely to deliver the music to a wider audience, rather than being actively involved in conditioning, constraining or neutering its very nature. In an age where groups are put together in the offices of the industry, and where 'styles' are created as a marketing tool, sometimes hardly requiring any actual musicians in the process, this paradigm of liberation through capitalism presented by McClary needs proper critique. She goes on to argue that 'it has not been despite but rather *by means of* the power of mass mediation [as provided by the culture industry – a term she herself uses two sentences previously] that the explosive energies of the blues managed to spread and develop in as many directions as it did' (ibid. p. 38).

¹⁸⁶ Compare in contrast to this the comments on jazz in a Workers's Music Association pamphlet from 1945, citing the popularity of this work whilst arguing that 'It would be a failure in their social duty, if musicians were to leave this natural instinct of the people to be exploited for commercial purposes, instead of making it a starting point for developing a wider appreciation of the whole range of music' (Workers' Musical Association, *Policy for Music in Post War Britain* (London: Workers' Musical Association, 1945), p. 4).

¹⁸⁷ See Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: The Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991) and Ben Watson, *Frank Zappa: The Negative Dialectics of Poodle Play* (London: Quartet, 1995).

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Humphrey Carpenter, *Dennis Potter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), pp. 349-350.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 350

Whether this optimism might be misplaced, or have a certain value in and of itself despite its context,¹⁹⁰ remains a little ambiguous; the same could be said of Finnissy's *Gershwin Arrangements*. In *My parents' generation*, Finnissy comes close to deliberately enacting what Adorno diagnosed, through his deliberate employment of a few stereotyped gestures to generate an ongoing stream of popular music throughout the work as well as the two obvious 'popular songs'. Whilst this process may constitute something of a caricature of popular music, nonetheless Finnissy sustains interest and variety not so much through the basic *material* as via its *configuration* and *context*. The same stock formulae are used variously to conjure up saccharine rhapsodic interruptions, a phantasmagoric halo around other more directional material, two barnstorming dance numbers that explode into violence, quasi-expressionist outbursts, whilst ultimately forlorn retreadings of dingy, well-worn paths are what is left afterwards. To make a clear distinction between 'pure' material and its configured and contextual renditions is not always easy in Finnissy's work – indeed one of the limitations of some traditional music criticism of jazz (and that of Adorno) is its overriding tendency to assign the latter attributes a role of secondary importance in a manner that can be most reductive. Nonetheless, the connections between these distinct passages are audible to the extent that it is meaningful to speak of some kernel of basic attributes. For the reasons of lack of developmental potential mentioned earlier, this music has a seductive surface appeal, but as presented in this piece it does not offer a coherent alternative to the possibilities inherent in more 'classical' forms.

The sexiness and 'shock of the new' represented by American popular culture and the concomitant conception of 'America', as its presence became more and more prominent in Britain from the 1930s onwards and especially during the war years, may have seemed such a breath of fresh air in the context of the drab world of imperial Britain. But with hindsight, with local businesses driven out of existence by American chains, the total domination by Hollywood of the film industry, the curtailing of basic provisions of housing, education, the welfare state and job security in favour of a more ruthless form of American free-market capitalism in which fear of exclusion, ostracisation and deprivation are never far away for many, and British troops marching into Afghanistan and Iraq to help fight neo-conservative imperial wars, does this 'America' look so glamorous any longer? And might there have been more potential in native traditions in Britain and Europe – not least those to do with culture – than was earlier realised, for all their undoubted faults? Enough to warrant not so much their 'preservation' as a continuation of their development, rather than ditching what relatively little still remains in favour of the total domination of commercial society? If one could extrapolate something of this out of the implications if not necessarily the self-enclosed world of *My parents' generation*,

¹⁹⁰ Glen Creeber argues that 'Popular culture, it [Potter's drama] suggests, could be liberating and inspirational as well as standardised, repetitive and ideological. Such a view can help explain Potter's own ambiguous relationship with pop culture which held both a fear of and fascination for the power of its commercialised and sentimentalised mythologies. Above all, his work gradually came to celebrate its power and, in particular, its ability to offer a form of resistance against dominant ideological practice by conjuring up memories of an older and more organic world – a world before the ideological dictatorship of the mass media had entered and overtaken the homes and minds of its consumers.' (Glen Creeber, *Dennis Potter Between Two Worlds: A Critical Reassessment* (London; Macmillan, 1998), p. 145). Elsewhere he links Potter to Hoggart, suggesting that 'Like Hoggart, Potter portrays the popular culture of the 1930s (personified by Bowlly's sentimental tunes) as providing the antithesis to the cultural disintegration of the present day.' (ibid. p. 128, see also p. 129).

might such a conviction represent the photograph in the Winter Garden, the realisation of the nature of Finnissy's mother's world and the importance of not burying it wholesale?

The relationship between popular culture and militarism mentioned earlier was not lost on Adorno, who regularly spoke of the relationship of the pulse of jazz to that of the military march, and furthermore argued that 'the entire arrangement of the jazz orchestra, in terms of the melody, bass, *obbligati*, and mere filler instruments, is identical to a military band'. He thus argued that 'jazz can be easily adapted for use to fascism', and pointed out that in Italy (which was under fascist rule at the time Adorno wrote the essay in question) 'it is especially well liked'.¹⁹¹ Like many of Adorno's pronouncements, this is extremely hyperbolic, but nonetheless contains more than a few seeds of truth as far as the more 'average' works of jazz, or more generally mass-produced popular music, is concerned. And this comparison has especial relevance in the context of a work that combines militaristic and popular musical materials as does *My parents' generation*. That militaristic music is anti-subjective almost goes without saying – its very purpose is to inspire unified collective feelings rather than incite unique and individualised responses. To a large extent the same is true of popular music produced so as to become a mass commodity (the equivocality and diversity of reactions to music which demands a subjective engagement are hardly the most efficient way to fulfil such a condition), as befits the interests of capital in terms of maximising profits. Many of the means of so doing – repetition, metrical regularity, standardisation, and crude glamour – are also similar. It is for this reason that Finnissy is able to create continuities between the two genres – compare the ambience of the first full popular song with that of 'Onward Christian Soldiers', for example, or look at the way he can smoothly integrate the popular archetypes into the initial abstracted militaristic music (not least because of the commonality of the dotted rhythms, also shared by the Debussy). However, what stands out as unsubsumed by the context and pointing outwards beyond the work's confines is the lyricism and emotional complexity in Finnissy's mediated renditions of the Busoni *Pezzo Serioso* and of South Italian folk music, right up to the work's conclusion (despite the final harmonic twists). *My parents' generation* may be a dispiriting work in many senses, presenting a musical analogue of shattered dreams, but some embers of hope remain unextinguished by its conclusion.

Chapter 5: *Alkan-Paganini*

Alkan-Paganini is an exploration both of various types of nineteenth-century pianistic idioms and of forms of diablerie, as exemplified by the two composers of the title, also filtered through the music of Schumann, Liszt, Berlioz and others. It is a work about explores the nature of virtuosity as a musical effect or form of expression, rather than virtuosity in a merely pianistic sense (though it is extremely demanding to play!). The tripartite structure is taken directly from Alkan's *Trois Grandes Études Op. 76*, the first of which is for left hand alone, the second for right hand alone, and the third for the hands

¹⁹¹ Adorno, 'On Jazz' (1936), in *Essays on Music*, p. 485. Adorno furthermore argued that 'The ban against it in [Nazi] Germany has to do with the surface tendency to reach back to pre-capitalist, feudal forms of immediacy and to call these socialism' (ibid.).

re-united. As the shortest and in some ways most quicksilver chapter of the *History*, it performs a scherzo-like function within the whole.¹⁹²

Structurally and conceptually *Alkan-Paganini* is not difficult to comprehend and as such is one of the most easily immediate pieces in the cycle, as well as being one of the most self-standing and thus individually performable chapters. In essence, the first section involves a free fantasy around various material in mediated form, the second is a high-octane quasi-cadenza around a basic species of Paganini-esque material, leading to its eventual statement in a clearer form. The third section begins with an explosive combination of the two hands playing material from the previous two sections, then settles into the clearest exposition of both Alkan and Paganini material yet (though still mediated), eventually dissolving (via a reiteration of the *motivo fondamentale*) into a melancholy coda.

The French-Jewish composer Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813-1888) continues barely to register in wider histories of nineteenth-century music¹⁹³ and is a difficult figure to gauge satisfactorily: a radically innovative writer for the keyboard, creating a unique idiom quite different to (but no less challenging than) those of Liszt or Thalberg, and given to startlingly visionary and modern uses of harmony, texture and rhythm, whilst at the same time a composer of melodies of sometimes embarrassing banality, over-extended passages that over-use certain types of ornamental figuration in an all-too-transparent attempt to cover up the dearth of substantial material they surround, and of strikingly unusual structural conceptions. Amongst the characteristics of his piano writing are a crispness of rhythm and articulation - far removed from the lush sonorities of Liszt or the morbid sensuousness of Chopin - which is often associated with the *style severe* school of French pianism - dry, classical, rhythmically regular and tight, emphasising clarity above all and centered upon the use of the fingers and wrist rather than so much the rest of the arm. This had many notable adherents in the nineteenth-century in France, as distinct to an opposing school descending from Chopin and Thalberg.¹⁹⁴ Alkan's music often presents unequalled rapidity of passage work, perhaps never exceeded (for example in the fourth of the Op. 35 *Études* or the first of the Op. 39 set, *Comme la vent*), fearsome leaps to be executed without hesitation, again at relentlessly quick tempos, and bravura configurations (always pianistic) to be tossed off as if they were simple. His rhythms are repetitive and obsessive in the use of certain patterns; his use of melodies of a few notes may have orientalist roots; his own brand of heroism and gallantry is generally presented with a degree of ironic detachment (more so than in Berlioz), almost satirically.

The first section of *Alkan-Paganini* plays upon material derived from Alkan's two fugues entitled *Jean qui pleure*, *Jean qui rit* (1840) (Fig. 35). *Jean qui pleure* uses what

¹⁹² A similar process is enacted on two levels within the revised four-book version of Finnissey *Verdi Transcriptions* (1972-2005), in which the fourth piece in each book forms a quirky scherzo-like movement.

¹⁹³ For example in standard English-language texts on the period: Alkan is not mentioned in Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Norton, 1984), Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London: Fontana, 1999) or either original or translation of Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, translated J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), and only extremely briefly in passing in Rey M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973) and Arnold Whittall, *Romantic Music: A Concise History from Schubert to Sibelius* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

¹⁹⁴ For more on the *style severe* and schools of French piano playing, see Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, second edition (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1999), especially pp. 46-52.

appears to be an original and quite chromatic theme in quavers and semiquavers, with oscillating ‘zig-zag’ patterns in the second bar. Alkan milks the chromaticism amply whilst also later rendering the theme in thirds and sixths. *Jean qui rit* is based upon the famous ‘champagne’ aria for Don Giovanni in Act 1, ‘Fin ch’han dal vino’, itself used for the final section of Liszt’s *Reminiscences de Don Juan*. But while Mozart’s aria is notable for its static harmonies (leading Benjamin Perl to suggest that Mozart may have been alluding to the *alla turca* style),¹⁹⁵ Alkan’s fugue is harmonically dynamic with ample use of chromatic pitch modification to produce unexpected harmonic twists. Varying between two and four voices, Alkan sometimes fixes upon subsections of the main theme, in particular the trill in the seventh bar.

Finnissy’s allusions to this Mozart aria in this chapter do not ever present the theme in an obviously recognisable form, but the resultant material (Fig. 35) shares numerous attributes (it is presented at ‘least remove’ during the two handed section, though still unrecognisably). These include a preponderance of repeated pitches and in particular the use of single or multiple trills in the two parts given to one hand, which is one of the most conspicuously ‘Alkan-esque’ features of the arrangement. Most of the material is derived from a set of 64 cells that are taken from the left hand of the Cocteau section of the *Poets* (themselves derived from the Alkan), then subject to random permutations. This material was itself derived from the Alkan/Mozart originals. Thus this material exists at a level of second derivation from the Alkan, third derivation from the Mozart (a ‘copy of a copy’).¹⁹⁶



Fig. 35 (a). Alkan, *Jean qui pleure*.

¹⁹⁵ See Benjamin Perl, ‘Mozart in Turkey’, in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 12 No. 3 (Nov. 2000), pp. 219-235.

¹⁹⁶ See Ian Pace, ‘The Piano Music’, pp. 78-83 for an elucidation of this process with Finnissy’s earlier piece *G.F.H.* (1985).

JEAN QUI RIT.



Fig. 35 (b). Alkan, *Jean qui rit.*



Fig. 35 (c). Some of the gamut of Alkan-derived gestures.

The Alkan section as a whole takes the form of a set of quasi-variations, using a wide range of pianistic figurations, some representing modernist reworkings of some of the techniques used in Alkan's *Douze Études dans les tons majeurs Op. 35*.¹⁹⁷ A low chord, heard at the outset, then recurrently, is derived from a pitch cipher from Alkan's name, which together with that of Paganini generates a fundamental nine-note scale (Fig. 36).

¹⁹⁷ See Ronald Smith, *Alkan: The Man/The Music* (two volumes in one) (London: Kahn & Averill, 2000), Vol. 2, pp. 98-109 for an extensive discussion of this cycle.

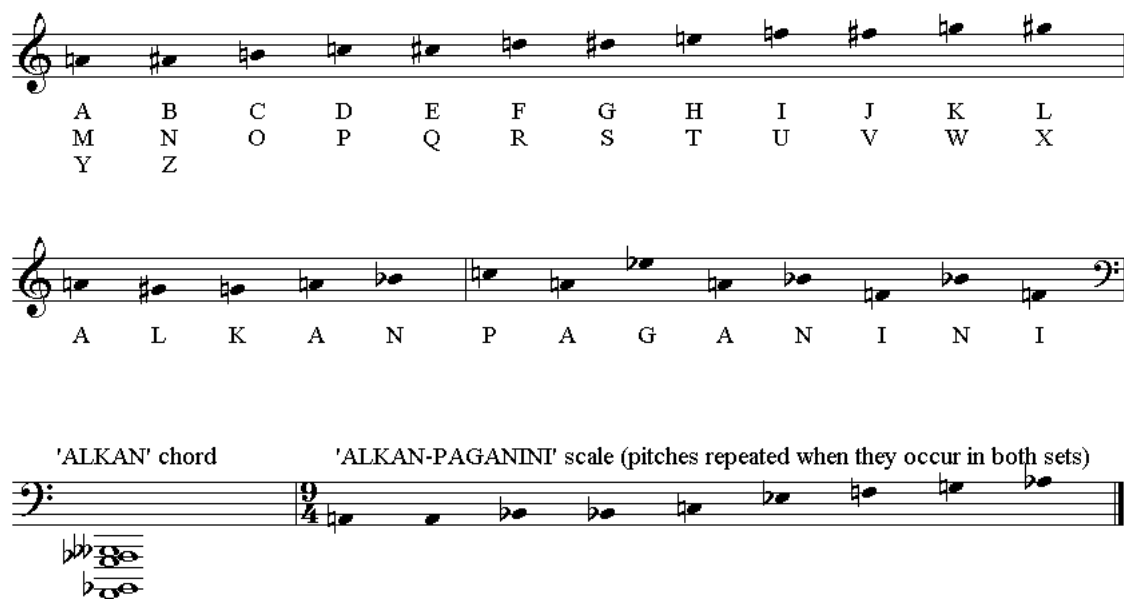


Fig. 36. Ciphers from names 'ALKAN' and 'PAGANINI', with resultant chord and scale. Note that in the chord, B-double flat is substituted for A at the top simply to facilitate the notation.

The section is in four episodes, the first most explosive and angular; the second in three parts (for one hand!) organised around a middle line derived from the twelfth of Alkan's Op. 35; the third more melodic and sustained, and introducing an allusion to the accompaniment of Weber's 'Choeur Barcarolle' from *Oberon* together with a derivation from the 'Lass uns im Himmel' section from the fundamental Bach chorale; the fourth dissolving the music into a series of fragments.

The right-hand section is naturally inspired by the playing of Genoa-born violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840), a seminal early figure in the nineteenth-century virtuoso tradition (of an older generation than Liszt, Thalberg, Alkan, Bülow, David, Vieuxtemps, Joachim and others). Paganini was hugely influential as both violinist and composer, creating new models for the solo instrumentalist that continue to gain adherents today. He dazzled audiences during tours of various parts of Europe, provoking near-incomprehension at the miracles of his playing. Many believed him to be literally possessed by the devil, a belief fed by his eccentric and eerie stage manner, as well as his thinness and aloof and ghostly appearance (actually the result of long-term illness produced by erroneous prescriptions by a quack doctor).¹⁹⁸ A whole mythology grew up around Paganini, including such sensationalist ideas as that he was in touch with supernatural forces, and that the fourth string of his violin was constructed out of his mistress's intestines, Paganini having murdered her and spent twenty years in jail for the crime.¹⁹⁹ He developed a style of playing that restricted the violin at first to only two strings and eventually to just one, the G string. Through the use of harmonics he could extend the compass of this last string to more than three octaves.²⁰⁰ An 1829 treatise on

¹⁹⁸ See Alan Kendall, *Paganini: A Biography* (London: Chappell & Co., 1982), pp. 27.

¹⁹⁹ See Kendall, *Paganini: A Biography* (London: Chapman & Co., 1922), pp. 27.

²⁰⁰ See Kendall, *Paganini*, p. 25. Apparently Princess Elise, Napoleon's sister, asked Paganini whether, 'Now that you have already played something so beautiful on two strings, couldn't you let us hear

Paganini's playing by Carl Guhr wrote of his 'powerful, all-conquering mechanism of execution with the godlike breathings of human tone, thus affording endless space for the workings of imagination, and touching the deepest feelings of the heart'.²⁰¹ Guhr listed Paganini's innovations as being *scordatura*, bowing, left-hand pizzicato, harmonics, performing on the G-string alone or two strings (he also often played on just two strings), fingering and 'extraordinary *tours de force*'.²⁰² Many of these qualities are reproduced in the right-hand section of *Alkan-Paganini*.

Both Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt were mesmerised by the playing of Paganini. Liszt, whose own brand of virtuosity was heavily inspired by Paganini, wrote:

"I, too, am a painter," cried Michelangelo, when he first beheld a masterpiece. humble and poor though I am, since I heard Paganini play I keep repeating Michelangelo's words to myself. René, what a man! What a violin! What an artist!! What suffering, what anguish, what torture those four strings can express! Look, here are some of his phrases . . .'²⁰³

Schumann's sentiments were equally characterised by awe and amazement, and he wrote two sets of *Études* based upon Paganini's work;²⁰⁴ the first of his *Sechs Concert-Étuden componirt nach Capricen von Paganini* Op. 10) (Fig. 37 (a)), itself derived from Paganini's Caprice Op. 1 No. 12 in A-flat major) (Fig. 37 (b)) provides the basis for the right-hand section of *Alkan-Paganini*. Unlike Liszt, Schumann does not really make a concerted effort to recreate the *physical* aspect of Paganini's playing at the piano. Finnissy, on the other hand, does indeed do so, in a uniquely modern manner. The Schumann piece is almost entirely in rotary patterns and arpeggios. Paganini's name as a musical cipher happens also to follow the same sort of rotary motion; such zig-zag figurations dominate the Paganini material in *Alkan-Paganini*.

something on one string?' (see John Sugden, *Niccolo Paganini; Supreme Violinist or Devil's Fiddler?* (Tunbridge Wells: Midas Books, 1980), p. 27)

²⁰¹ Carl Guhr, *Ueber Paganini's Kunst. Die Violine zu spielen ein Anhang zu jeder bis jetzt erschienenen Violinschule* (Mainz: Schott, 1829); English version *Paganini's Art of Playing the Violin, With a Treatise on Single and Double Harmonic Notes*, translated Sabilla Novello, revised C. Egerton Lowe (London: Novello, 1915), p. vi.

²⁰² Guhr, *Paganini's Art*, p. ix. See Schwarz, *Great Masters*, pp. 196-199 for a wider exploration of each of these. According to Guhr, the idea of playing whole pieces on the G-string alone originated in a piece written for Princess Elise, duchess of Tuscany and the sister of Napoleon. This was in the form of a 'conversation' between the G and E strings, the former representing the lover, the latter the loved one. Both the Princess and the whole Court favoured the dialogue, and the Princess challenged Paganini to speak only as a Man, using strong tones. Hence he saw the use of the G-string alone as a way of demonstrating this (Guhr, *Paganini's Art*, p. vii). See also Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 101-102 and Kendall, *Paganini*, pp. 25-27. Kendall is somewhat sceptical about the claims that Paganini deliberately tuned his strings so that they would break during the concert.

²⁰³ From a letter to La Mara (Marie Lipsius) of 2nd May 1832, cited in Renée de Saussine, *Paganini*, translated Marjorie Laurie with preface by Jacques Thibaud (London: Hutchinson, 1953), p. 124.

²⁰⁴ See Robert Schumann, *Tagebüch*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971), p. 404, cited in John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 94 and Eric Frederick Jensen, *Schumann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 95-97.

Sechs Concert-Etuden
 componirt nach Capricen von Paganini
 für das Pianoforte
 von
ROBERT SCHUMANN.
 Op. 10.

Schumann's Werke. Serie 7. N^o 40.
 Componirt 1833.



Fig. 37 (a). Schumann, *Sechs Concert-Etuden componirt nach Capricen von Paganini* Op. 10 No. 1

Caprice No. 12 in A-flat Major

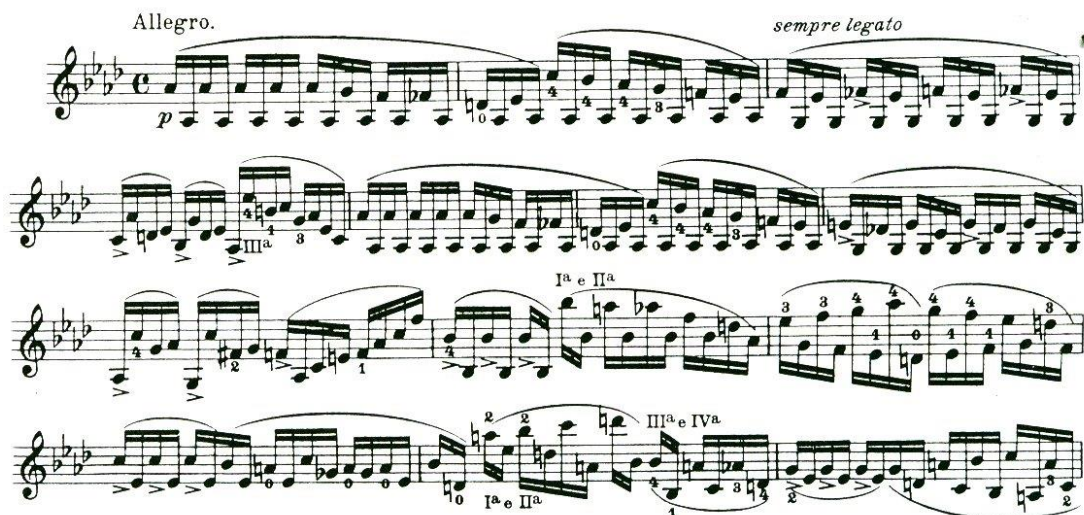


Fig. 37 (b). Paganini, *Caprice No. 12 in A-flat Major*

Finnissy creates a matrix of pitch cells from this material and develops them in various ways (using techniques also found in the music of Olivier Messiaen), as well as selecting pitches from the Paganini on a more *ad hoc* basis. The piano writing is designed for the most part to imitate the sound of the violin (with numerous rhetorical grace-note

flourishes mimicking open strings), though it occasionally moves into the bass clef, which Finnissy has described as being intended to signify those ‘sounds never before heard’ that Spohr and others described in Paganini’s playing.²⁰⁵ It is in two parts throughout, perhaps a reflection upon the following comment in *Le Revue Musicale* in 1829:

Monsieur Pacini [a music publisher] possesses the original manuscript of a duet which Paganini executes solo with amazing skill. It has a left hand *pizzicato* accompaniment, while the intricate melody which contains a great many quick passages, is played with the bow. The effect produced is that of two distinct instruments.²⁰⁶

Finnissy begins with varying metres, accelerandos and various wide spread chords, until a continuous 4 against 3 pattern emerges. In general, there is little of a sense of harmonic progression throughout the section, contoural differentiation being a more prominent feature. The expansions of register give a clear sense of development, and eventually this knife-edge music explodes into wild runs, derived from the same material – a different form of ‘compression’ – in between continuing in an almost impossibly dense and overloaded manner. Finally the music regains composure in a *Vivace* section, in which the Schumann/Paganini reference seems more explicit.

For the two-handed section, Finnissy begins by giving a version of the left hand material to the right hand, and vice versa, though the hands soon begin to alternate. In both cases the basic line is derived from a cut-up and transposition of the earlier sections. The dynamics are clearly terraced, a layer in *ffff* at the outset, sustained right through to the *meno mosso*, then down to *ff* soon afterwards, followed by an *mf* passage. Within these are inserted several passages of material with more of an A-flat centered tonality, freely employing the ‘Alkan-Paganini’ scale, to lead towards the somewhat calmer final section, in which the left hand in particular is much closer to the Schumann/Paganini original than hitherto. The Paganini material remains in or around A-flat major (whilst the Alkan material is in F, thus reproducing the fundamental major sixth interval between the keys of the two hands), and features repeated notes regularly – the beginning derives very clearly from the opening of the Paganini Caprice with octave modifications, then rhythmic changes and addition of an extra line. The combination of a repeated note followed by a falling sequence, as at the beginning of the Schumann/Paganini, recurs several times, whilst Finnissy works in passages from the Pasolini material of the *Poets* and also Norwegian folk tunes as used in *Muybridge-Munch*. Finally he interrupts the material to reintroduce the *motivo fondamentale*, before a shimmering conclusion looking forward to music in *Unsere Afrikareise*, specifically that relating to Félicien David’s *Le desert*, a key work for the Saint-Simonian movement which interested many artists (including Liszt) contemporary with Alkan and Paganini.

Alkan-Paganini takes to the furthest extent the idea of a ‘copy of a copy’ or *simulacrum*.²⁰⁷ There is nowhere in the piece where the Mozart original is recognisable; yet Alkan’s *Jean qui rit* would be impossible without it. Furthermore, this piece is one of the least harmonically directed in the cycle (which is one reason why I have not discussed harmony other than in very broad terms). Not that the use of pitch is unrefined, by any means; rather it is concentrated in such a way as to focus attention on gestural rather than harmonic features, from which unwanted consonances and progressions might distract.

²⁰⁵ Private conversation with the author.

²⁰⁶ Cited in Saussine, *Paganini*, p. 129.

²⁰⁷ This issue will be discussed more in the context of *Unsere Afrikareise*.

Finnissy manages to extract from Alkan's piece the attributes of Alkan's mediating techniques independently of their object. Alkan's transcription seems to be rendered in terms of 'pure difference'; transcription as an abstract form of mediation that could be said to *precede* its application to objects²⁰⁸ (rather than being abstracted from such a thing, as discussed in the context of *Le réveil*). In that way it demonstrates how abstraction and uncanny virtuosity are by no means necessarily mutually exclusive categories.

Chapter 6: *Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets*

Seventeen Immortal Homosexual Poets was the first section of the *History of Photography* to be completed, and as such was Finnissy's first large scale piano work since the completion of *Folklore* in 1994. After such a high degree of musical referentiality in *Folklore* and his subsequent shorter piano works, Finnissy made use of this opportunity to exploit a more 'abstracted' type of material at the very outset of the work, hearkening back a little to some of his piano works of the 1960s and 1970s.

The meaning of the title is obvious; the 'immortality' of the poets is indicated by Finnissy's indication only of their birthdates in the score, although many are now dead). As presented by Finnissy in the score, they are as follows:

- (1) Gregory Woods (1953-);
- (2) Mutsuo Takahashi (1937-);
- (3) Thom Gunn (1929-);
- (4) Allen Ginsberg (1926-);
- (5) Frank O'Hara (1926-);
- (6) Harold Norse (1926-);
- (7) Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-);
- (8) James Kirkup (1918-);
- (9) Jean Genet (1910-);
- (10) Stephen Spender (1909-);
- (11) Federico García Lorca (1898-);
- (12) Ralph Chubb (1892-);
- (13) Jean Cocteau (1889-);
- (14) Konstantinos Kavafis (1863-);
- (15) Oscar Wilde (1854-);
- (16) Edward Carpenter (1844-);
- (17) John Addington Symonds (1840-).

Some sections of the piece were clearly composed or drafted a while before Finnissy began serious work on it – the sketches date the Pasolini, Chubb and Kavafis material as having been written in January 1995.

For the basic conceptual strategy, Finnissy drew inspiration from the film *Galaxie* (1966) by the homosexual director Gregory Markopoulos (1928-1992). Markopoulos filmed thirty-three personalities from the artistic world, poets, painters, film directors and

²⁰⁸ The concept I am presenting here owes something to Gilles Deleuze's ideas of 'Difference in itself'. For more on this subject, see Deleuze, 'Difference in Itself', in *Difference and Repetition*, translated Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 36-89.

others, including W.H. Auden, Allen Ginsberg (who also appears as a personage in the *Poets*), Jasper Johns and Susan Sontag, each in their apartments. He would point the camera at the subjects for a while, then move away to pan around the room, inspecting their books and other paraphernalia for clues to personalities based upon their possessions. Markopoulos drew upon techniques used when in filming his own New York apartment earlier the same year in the short film *Ming Green* (1966), focusing on his possessions such as a photographic nude by Edmund Teske, a rose as a gift from students, and several record albums, as well as a dress shirt.²⁰⁹

Finnissy parallels Markopoulos's basic strategy by the characteristic use of musical materials that can be associated with each of the poets in question. The piece is structured as a series of episodes on each poet in turn (presented in reverse chronological order of birth date), connected by other sections or 'melanges', which offer space for reflection.

Finnissy has described his particular choice of poets as being designed as much to do with their iconic status (from which in part springs their perceived immortality) as their actual work.²¹⁰ Poems by many of them are included in *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, which Finnissy had to hand when writing the piece.²¹¹ Finnissy himself compared the work to a Japanese *wakashu*²¹² collection of poetry, the most famous of which is the *Kokin wakashu*, a collection of poems from ancient and modern times compiled in the year 905.²¹³

The musical material presented for each poet is sharply characterised and highly distinguished from the others (though there are some linking attributes between a few poets, as I will explain). Each such 'episode' is relatively short, producing the highest density of stylistic variegation in the whole cycle, found in this central chapter. Thus the overall structure of the work, which resembles a rapid cinematic montage, is relatively clear to the listener (allowing for possible and understandable confusion about where one poet begins and another ends, and the distinction between the episodes and the melanges).

A: (1) Gregory Woods; (2) Mutsuo Takahashi; (3) Thom Gunn; (4) Allen Ginsberg; Transition 1

B: (5) Frank O'Hara

C: (6) Harold Norse; (7) Pier Paolo Pasolini; (8) James Kirkup; (9) Jean Genet; (10) Stephen Spender

D: Mélange I – a cut-up of short fragments of material placed upon rhythmic and other matrices based on (i) Genet, (ii) Kirkup, (iii) Gunn, (iv) Pasolini, (v) O'Hara, but always with a thread derived from the fundamental Bach chorale BWV 328 running through.

²⁰⁹ See Kristin Jones, 'Ming Green: The Colour of Memory', in *Millenium Film Journal* No. 32/33 (Fall 1998), available online at <http://www.mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ32%2C33/jones.html> (accessed 10/7/2006).

²¹⁰ Private conversations with the author.

²¹¹ Stephen Coote (ed), *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, second edition (London: Penguin, 1986). This includes poems by all of the authors cited in the *Poets* except for Woods, Takahashi, Wilde (!) and Symonds.

²¹² Finnissy, programme note for the *History*. The term *wakashu* also refers to a boy under the age of nineteen.

²¹³ See Helen Craig McCullough, *Kokin Wakashu: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

E: *Mélange II*. Similar to *Mélange I*, but without the presence of the Bach. (i) Genet again, incorporating a reference to *Alkan-Paganini* and a vague allusion to Ginsburg, (ii) a longer passage using categories of material that will emerge later in *UA*, (iii) Kirkup (very short), (iv) O'Hara (likewise), (v) a more extended section combining the Pasolini material in the right hand and the Kirkup material in the left.

F: (11) Federico Garçia Lorça; (12) Ralph Chubb; (13) Jean Cocteau; Transition 2 (returning to Lorca)

G: (14) Konstantinos Kavafis; (15) Oscar Wilde; Transition 3 (returning to Wilde); Insert (a) of rapid chordal material; (16) Edward Carpenter; (17) John Addington Symonds, interrupted successively by Inserts (b), (c) and (d) of rapid chordal material.

H: Compression: Extended virtuoso cataclysm of very rapid periodic chords and notes

I: *Mélange III*: Coda returning to the hushed world of O'Hara, denser and ornate, once again organised around the Bach chorale.

The relative prominence of gestures, lines or chords has already been outlined in the 'Material as Archetype' section. A detailed outline of the musical characterisation of each poet (too extensive to detail here) can be found in my monograph on the work mentioned at the beginning of this note. What follows is an abridged version of this.

Gregory Woods' poetry is terse, concentrated, often transforming prose-like sentences into groups of four three-line stanzas, each with two metrical feet, and abounds with blatant homoerotic allusions. Finnissy derives ciphers from the poet's name, and also some rhythms from the poetry (Fig. 38).

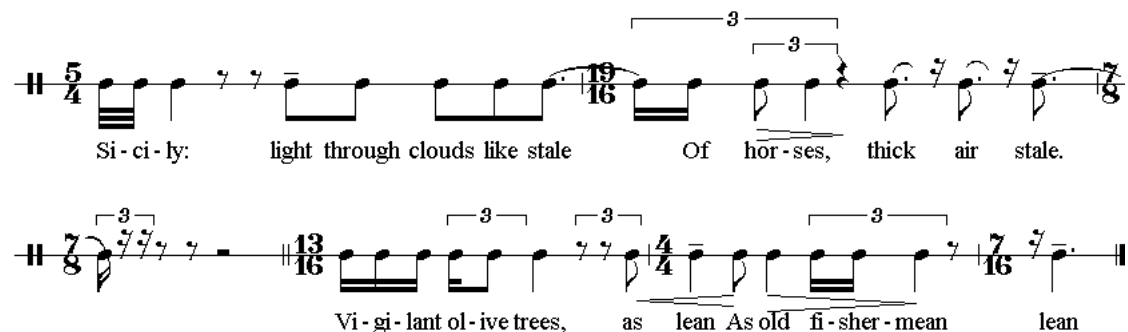


Fig. 38. Rhythms derived from Gregory Woods, 'Fall'.

Mutsuo Takahashi's work, if translations of it are to be trusted as being faithful to their source, evokes images and sensations of extreme desire using archetypal allusions and terms. There is an underlying tone of violence in his work and frequent sadomasochistic allusions, reflected in the tempestuous music (developing further some of the gestural world of the material for Woods). For pitch material, Finnissy uses scales based on Takahashi's name in contrary motion.

The earlier poetry of Thom Gunn, one of the five poets referenced by Finnissy who were educated at the British public schools (the others being Spender, Chubb, Carpenter and Symonds), combined a type of formalism akin to the late work of W.H. Auden with contemporary subject matter (motorcycle gangs, revolutionaries, Claus von Staffenburg, Elvis, etc.). Later poems explore the use of free verse and speak more explicitly of drugs and homosexuality. Finnissy here develops the Woods and Takahashi

material in another direction, sparser, restricted to the treble register, alternating legato and staccato and in the first section permeated by low E-flats and B-flats that imply an E-flat tonality (as both the first letters in 'Thom' spell D# = E-flat in the musical cipher).

The work of the fourth poet, Allen Ginsberg, uses discontinuous montage-like techniques with unity provided by theme rather than narrative, a stress upon varied use of pulse rather than fixed metre, and a small amount of typographical experimentation, all in the service of an ultimately romantic, even primitivist world-view. Finnissy brings the type of material of the Woods and Takahashi sections here to a head, infested with crazed gracenote groups encompassing a wide tessitura and potent trills, in a way he has described as like a 'parody of 1960s high modernism'.²¹⁴ The second section is a 'Reckless Blues', as a reference to the fact that Ginsberg himself composed some blues (from which some of Finnissy's material is very obliquely derived).

Frank O'Hara's work is diverse in terms of both its subject matter and its technical and stylistic devices (he would often experiment with radical forms and techniques), but always with a level of high discipline and refinement to the use of language (whilst maintaining a frequently hazy and melancholy tone). O'Hara was closely associated with both the musical and artistic worlds of New York City, about which he wrote a large amount, and evoked the city itself frequently, in a manner that suggests bewilderment and alienation.²¹⁵ This section also exists as a separate piece *Portrait of Frank O'Hara as Orpheus in Hell*, the first part of the cycle to be performed.²¹⁶ Finnissy hit upon a notion of the poet as a an Orpheus-like figure in the modern 'hell' of New York City,²¹⁷ and so chose to use for his source materials music of O'Hara's collaborator Morton Feldman (specifically *The O'Hara Songs* (1962) and *For Frank O'Hara* (1973), the former a setting of the O'Hara poem 'Wind' (1962), itself dedicated to Feldman).²¹⁸ The other source was Offenbach's opera *Orphée aux Enfers* (Fig. 39),²¹⁹ to add a symbolical allusion to Orpheus. Once again, Finnissy uses a musical cipher for O'Hara's name, providing the initial pitch for each bar, which are applied to random fragments selected from the alto line of the Offenbach. To this he adds a bass line derived from the setting of 'Who'd have thought that snow falls' in *The O'Hara Songs*, again using pitches from the full note cipher of

²¹⁴ Private conversation with the author

²¹⁵ In private correspondence, the poet Harry Gilonis suggested a quite different interpretation of the poem as 'vibrantly alive, happy in a slightly *faux-naïf* way (he admits to the existence of ugliness only in book design, and it is quietly subsumed into a satisfactory transaction with the world – he buys the book after all). The mode/mood is Apollinaire, giddy with excitement at the shire *quiddity* of Paris. His (rare) miseries are socio-sexual, not civic'. Nonetheless, I maintain the interpretation I give here, in light of the very routine implied by the precise times of the trains and the normative nature of his dealings with the cashier, the juxtaposition of 'muggy street' with 'hamburger', and the vaguely Beckettian listing of books without further comment. The accumulative metrical feet, which themselves suggest enthusiasm, are given an ironic twist by the mundanity of the way the subject matter is detailed.

²¹⁶ This work was also separately commissioned by the Monnaie Opera House, Brussels, for a concert given there by the author on March 7th 1997.

²¹⁷ Private comments to the author.

²¹⁸ Frank O'Hara, *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*, edited Donald Allen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), p. 269.

²¹⁹ The score Finnissy used was Offenbach, *Orphée aux Enfers*, Heugel & Cie (Production 'Théâtre de la Gaité', 7th Février 1874, Opéra-Féerie en 4 actes et 12 tableaux), 'Nouvelle Partition Réduite pour piano et chant'

O'Hara's name to supply the beginning point of fragments, together with chords all derived from Feldman's *For Frank O'Hara*.²²⁰

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff is for a vocal part, with two systems of music. The first system is for 'VENUS' and the second for 'L'OPINION PUBLIQUE'. The lyrics are 'en - dor - mons' and 'B'e - da - me c'est de courir'. The second staff is a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time, featuring a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Fig. 39. Passages from Offenbach *Orfée aux Enfers*.

Harold Norse was influenced by both the Objectivists and the Beat Generation (amongst whom he was welcomed as a fellow traveller).²²¹ His poems are in free verse, often employing a wide variety of experimental typographical devices. Norse's frequent homoerotic evocations have something of a macho quality, suggesting hard-nosed sexual determination rather than submissive rapture. Finnissy again uses a cipher for Norse's name, and uses random techniques to apply this to passages from the O'Hara section to provide continuity, then introduces a version of an Ethiopian folk tune from Addis Ababa (transcribed by Emile Bloch from an 1897 phonograph), a love song, intended to portray 'the stylized Algiers²²² of Norse's poetry and the boy prostitutes that he used'²²³ (Fig. 40).

²²⁰ Feldman himself said of this piece that 'My primary concern (as in all my music) is to sustain a "flat surface" with a minimum of contrast' ('For Frank O'Hara', in *Give My Regards to Eighth Street: Collected Writings of Morton Feldman*, edited B.H. Friedman (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 2000), p. 127). This seems also to be Finnissy's intention in this section.

²²¹ See the introduction to Harold Norse, *In the Hub of the Fiery Force: Collected Poems 1934-2003* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), p. xviii.

²²² The use of an Ethiopian folk tune to signify somewhere as remote as Algiers is in keeping with the very loose, even arbitrary, nature of geographical identifications throughout this piece. However, some have discerned or suggested Arabic influences upon Ethiopian folk music. See Powne, *Ethiopian Music*, pp. 42-57 for some information on links between Ethiopian and Arab musical instruments, also pp. 86-87 on religious influences from the Middle East.

²²³ From private conversations with Finnissy. Note that my mention of paedophilic sex tourism here in no sense implies an advocacy or endorsement of it. Norse's feelings are made quite clear in the poem 'Behind the Glass Wall', which includes the lines 'genitals thick swollen out / of big tear in pants / derelict 14 yr old street arab / cameras snapping / like teeth/great souk / swarms for dirhams / and who

Finnissy regularly compresses and modifies the melodic material, shifting the initial mode to become an Arabic *maqam* (in this case first constructed from two tetrachords, with ascending intervals of semitone-whole tone-whole tone, which are generally associated with the Kurds,²²⁴ then into another mode unidentifiable in one of its constituent tetrachords with any Arabic source; nor are either of the three basic Ethiopian modes ('*Ezel*, '*Ge'ez*, and '*Araray*')²²⁵ identifiable). He harmonises with a recurrent F#/B, then d'/g' fourth, creating a correspondence with the recurrent minor/major sixths throughout the cycle as well as other ostinato-like figures to be found with *Unsere Afrikareise* and in the prototype for that work slightly later in this piece.

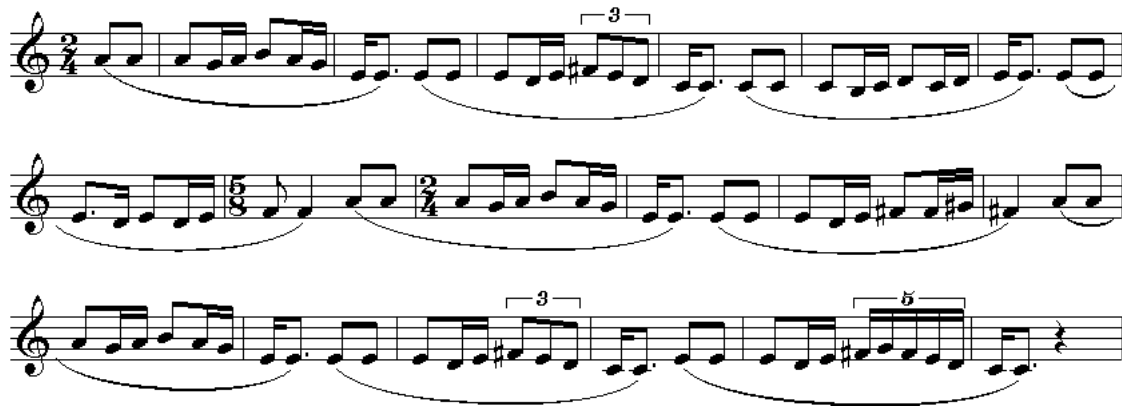


Fig. 40. Ethiopian love song, transcribed by Emile Bloch from a phonograph roll made in Addis Ababa by Prince Henri d'Orléans in 1897.²²⁶

Pier Paolo Pasolini is clearly an important figure for Finnissy (as he was also for the film-maker Derek Jarman); the music he here associates with him recurs regularly throughout the *History*. Pasolini's love for peasant and folk civilisation (from a highly romanticised perspective),²²⁷ his disdain for and rage at many aspects of contemporary bourgeois civilisation, not least in terms of sexual hypocrisy and repression, interest in uncovering mythical archetypes within his subject matter, and deep awareness of fascist undercurrents in behaviour and society (not to mention the reality of actual fascism, as captured in his notorious final film *Saló o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (1976)), and interest in Antonio Gramsci,²²⁸ all resonate strongly with many of Finnissy's own concerns.²²⁹

/ are you little arab / I shared my visions / and ate / black hasheesh candy with / the door of yr body flung / open we twitched in spasms / muscular convulsions / heavenly epilepsy on the bed ' (*Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, pp. 340-341).

²²⁴ Though Finnissy says this is purely coincidental – private conversations with the author.

²²⁵ See Powne, *Ethiopian Music*, pp. 96-97.

²²⁶ Printed in Powne, *Ethiopian Music*, p. 132.

²²⁷ Oswald Stack speaks of how, throughout Pasolini's career, his work in general stresses 'the need to restore an epic and mythological dimension to life, a sense of awe and reverence to the world: a sense which, he believes, the peasantry still sustain, though the bourgeoisie has done all in its power to destroy it', involving an 'emphasis on the spirituality of the peasantry, their semi-pagan consciousness of super-natural meanings and forces', which Stack realises 'is obviously difficult to reconcile with a marxist political analysis' (Oswald Stack (ed), *Pasolini on Pasolini* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), p. 9). These leads Pasolini to such amazing conclusions as that the 'peasant communists' were 'the ones who make revolutions' in Russia (as well as other countries where this claim is more truth to it) (*ibid.* p. 22).

²²⁸ Pasolini spoke of how when 'reading marxist texts, the most important, even more important than Marx himself, was Gramsci. . . Whereas Gramsci's ideas coincided with mine; they on me over

Pasolini's poetry (which he began to write from the age of seven) is as vivid, charged, incendiary and tender as are his films, but carefully controlled through the appropriation of techniques from classical verse. He captures sordid realism, the decadence of contemporary civilisation (without ever romanticising such a fact), his hatred for consumerism, as well as homoerotic longing, in an inflamed but carefully paced verse.²³⁰

The folk-like quality of the Norse section provides a clear link with the material for Pasolini, for which Finnissey makes use of a Sardinian folk tune, originally played on a *launeddas*, a Sardinian triple clarinet, which consists of a pipe played with the left hand and attached to a drone pipe, with yet another pipe for their right hand. It is one of many reed instruments that are traceable back to ancient Egypt and were disseminated throughout the Mediterranean area.²³¹ Finnissey draws upon the pioneering 1969 study of the instrument and its music by Danish musicologist Weis Bentzon,²³² featuring transcriptions of music written for line dancing in northern Sardinia, as well as for song marches and religious ceremonies.²³³ Fig. 41 shows three examples of the *launeddas* music included in Bentzon's volume as selected (randomly) by Finnissey,²³⁴ and the ways in which he modifies it to produce his own material. In this way he creates a line which is divided into fragments for later use, used at many different points in the cycle.

There is a particular iconic significance to this type of material for Finnissey himself: Sardinian folk-music had provided the source material for one of his first major essays in folk-inspired music, his work for mezzo-soprano, flute, percussion and piano *Duru-Duru* (1981). Pasolini had paid tribute to the Sardinian Gramsci in his collection of poems, *The Ashes of Gramsci* (1957), and described the 'Sardinian muse' as having until

immediately, and he had a fundamental role in my formation' (Stack (ed), *Pasolini on Pasolini*, p. 23. Finnissey cites Gramsci in his programme note for *Folklore*, specifically the reference to 'Gramsci's imperative to compile an inventory of the 'infinity of traces' that historical processes leave on 'the self'' (Finnissey, programme note for *Folklore*, included in edition of the score (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)). The precise quote from Gramsci, perhaps one of the most fundamental conceptions informing Finnissey's engagements with other musics and allusions is 'The starting-point of critical elaboration in the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.' (Antonio Gramsci, 'The Study of Philosophy', from *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 324).

²²⁹ Interestingly, Pasolini would not side with the demonstrating students of 1968 (at which time Finnissey was studying in Italy - he alludes to these events in the context of *Folklore* - see Pace, 'The Piano Music', p. 122). For Pasolini, the police deserved more support than the students, for 'Those cops were the sons of a poor subproletariat, disinherited by bourgeois society *within* the police force'. Pasolini issued a tract called *Il PCI ai giovani!!* expressing his sentiments. See Enzo Siciliano, *Pasolini*, translated John Shepley with introduction by Paul Bailey (London: Bloomsbury, 1987), pp. 325-328.

²³⁰ For an insightful investigation of Pasolini's *The Ashes of Gramsci* in particular, see Siciliano, *Pasolini*, pp. 205-222. Siciliano argues that 'Just as Baudelaire, in his polemics against the formlessness of the Romantics, re-evaluated the alexandrine and the closed form of the sonnet, so Pasolini, against the formlessness of neo-experimentalism, re-evaluated the hendecasyllable and the tercet, utilizing within them all the breaks and irregularities of classical composition'; from this he argues that 'in Pasolini, the poetics of "stylistic regression" were to assure compensations in the literary marketplace, a wider popularity' (ibid. p. 206).

²³¹ Jan Ling, *A History of European Folk Music*, translated Linda and Robert Schenck (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997), p. 129.

²³² Bentzon, *The Launeddas*.

²³³ Ling, *A History of European Folk Music*, p. 129.

²³⁴ These examples are taken from Bentzon, *The Launeddas*, pp. 108, 37-38, 21.

now retained a ‘sensual, religious nature, in the pagan or mystical sense’.²³⁵ The Pasolini folk material will recur later in extended form in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, and play a major role in the final third of this piece, *Sizilianische Männerakte*.



Fig. 41 (a). *Launeddas* melody, 4 x 4/4 formula. Singer Angelo Pili. *Ispinellu a pipia* Dionigi Burranca. With Finnissy’s transcription.



Fig. 41 (b). *Launeddas* melody, Professional dance. Fiorassiu. *Dionigi Burranca*. With Finnissy’s transcription.

At the end of this section, the folk music is joined (in Ives-like manner) by material in the bass register derived from the soprano and alto parts of the Bach chorale ‘O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden’ (Fig. 42), which is No. 54 from the *Matthäus Passion*, as

²³⁵ Pasolini, *Passione e ideologia* (Milan: Garzanti, 1973), cited in Angelo Mundula, ‘Sardinia’ at <http://home.att.net/~l.bonaffini/sardegna.htm> (accessed 11/10/2006).

a reference to Pasolini's film *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel according to St Matthew*) (1964).²³⁶

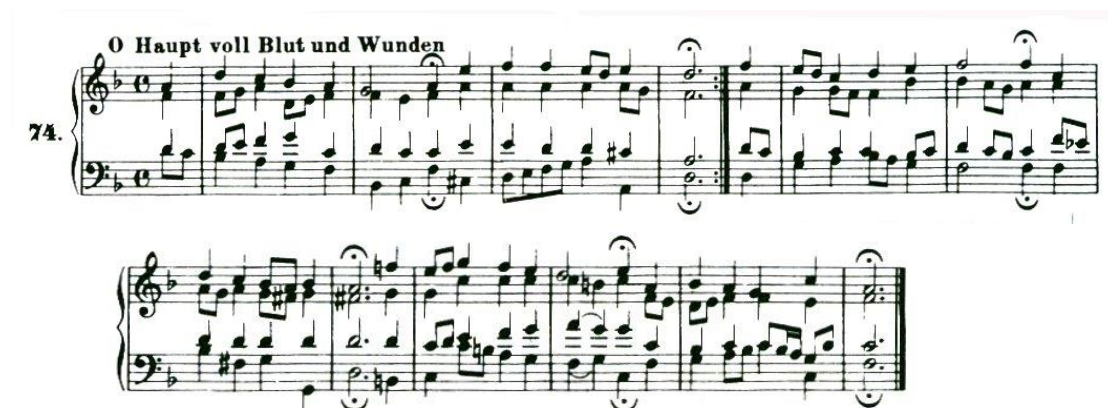


Fig. 42. Bach, Chorale 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden'.

James Kirkup is perhaps most notorious for his poem *The Love that Dares to Speak its Name* (after the poem by Lord Alfred Douglas 'Two Loves' (1894), which ends 'Unasked by night; I am true Love, I fill / The hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame.' / Then sighing, said the other, 'Have thy will, / I am the love that dare not speak its name. '),²³⁷ in which he fantasised about a sexual encounter between Jesus of Nazareth and a Roman Centurion. This poem was the subject of a now-infamous blasphemy trial in 1977 after its publication in the British magazine *Gay News*.²³⁸ Finnissy chose to represent his perception of this type of religious 'deviance' by taking a selection of traditional Passiontide hymns, and inverting them. The hymns in question are 'Rockingham' ('When I survey the wondrous cross') by Edward Miller (1731-1807) (see Fig. 3 (b), and Fig. 43 for Finnissy's transformation), adapted S. Webbe (1820), 'Stabat Mater' from the *Maintzich Gesangbuch* of 1661, adapted Webbe (1782), and 'Salve Festa Dies', written by Vaughan Williams (1905). The first two of these sources are in two parts, the third a single line. Despite the use of inversion and combination, the material retains many of the qualities of the traditional English hymn – earnest, warm, plodding, and the like.

It is with the Pasolini and Kirkup sections that the most characteristic Finnissy voice comes through in this piece. The quasi-cinematic overlaying of transformed versions of Sardinian folk-music and Passiontide hymns/Bach chorales creates a powerful impact; both types of material bringing with them such a wealth of implications, not least

²³⁶ Pasolini also used music of Bach in his first film *Accattone* (1961), saying about this 'I think what scandalized them in *Accattone* was the mixture of the violent Roman subproletariat with the music of Bach, whereas in *Mamma Roma* there is a different kind of combination which was less shocking – ordinary people who are trying to be petit bourgeois with the music of Vivaldi, which is much more Italian and is based on popular music, so the contamination is much less violent and shocking.' (Stack (ed), *Pasolini on Pasolini*, pp. 52-53).

²³⁷ See Alfred Douglas, *Collected Poems* (New York: AMS Press, 1994), and *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, pp. 262-264.. Finnissy also named his orchestral work *Speak its Name!* (1996) after this poem.

²³⁸ For more on the trial, see 'The gay poem that broke blasphemy laws', *Pink News*, January 10th 2008, at <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2008/01/10/the-gay-poem-that-broke-blasphemy-laws/> (accessed 21/8/13).

the sonic combination of florid line in one hand and chordal progression in the other, but without an attempt to integrate the two.

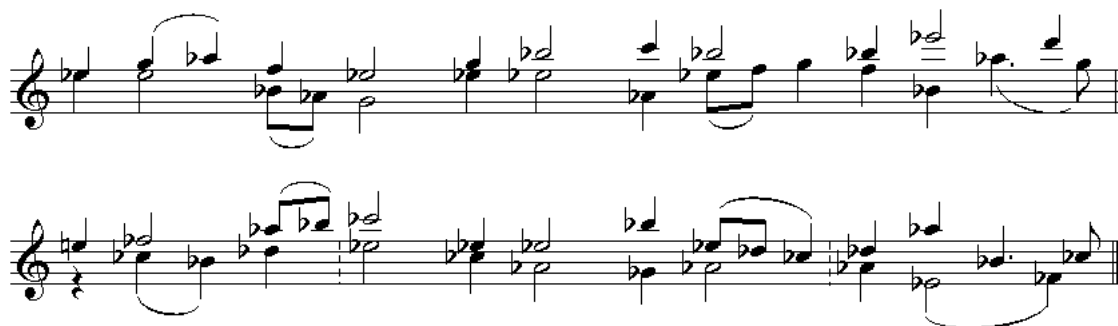


Fig. 43. Inversions of parts of *Rockingham*, with modifications.

To represent the work of poet, novelist, playwright, petty thief and prostitute Jean Genet, whose aestheticism is always tempered by the sordid nature of his subject matter, and whose moral subversion matched by the reinscription of other forms of morality, Finnissy uses ragtime (from fragments from Scott Joplin, James Scott, Harry L. Cook, and others), as might have been heard in brothels (to reference Genet's play *Le Balcon*, in which men in a brothel act out fantasies in which they become figures of authority, then realise the emptiness of such positions, whilst a revolution proceeds outside)²³⁹. Compared to the short ragtime passage at the end of the *Spirituals*, Finnissy here constructs a more abstract rag out of fragments and melodic archetypes, but which nonetheless also relates in some ways to the genre on a structural level.²⁴⁰

Various questions have been asked about the sexuality of Stephen Spender, but because of doubts as to whether homo/hetero/bisexuality should be considered as an identity, rather than simply a set of practices, I do not wish to dwell upon these here.²⁴¹ Spender was the most passionately committed to left-wing causes of all the 'thirties generation' (a category usually taken to include Spender, W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas), but would later turn away from his earlier politics and contribute something of a *mea culpa* in the anti-communist volume

²³⁹ Finnissy was soon afterwards to write another Genet-inspired work, his piano trio *Un chant d'amour* (1999, rev. 2003) to accompany Genet's erotic film of the same name.

²⁴⁰ David Jasen and Trebor Tichenor open their book on ragtime with the basic definition 'Ragtime is a musical composition for the piano comprising three or four sections containing sixteen measures each which combines a syncopated melody accompanied by an even, steady duple rhythm' (their italics). See David A. Jasen & Trebor Jay Tichenor, *Rags and Ragtime: A Musical History* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), p. 1.

²⁴¹ It should be noted, though, that neither of the two poems included in the *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, '18' and 'To T.A.R.H.', are included in the 1985 edition of Spender's *Collected Poems 1928-1985* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), whilst they had been included in the 1953 edition of Spender's poems (see *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, 'Acknowledgements', p. 27). According to David Leeming, after the appearance of this later edition, and also the *Journals 1939-1983* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), John Lehmann asked why Spender had 'censored' some poems from the 1930s. Spender 'replied by assuring Lehmann that the revisions did not represent censorship but were determined by aesthetic concerns. He wished to avoid "gushing" and things "poetically bad." Several of the poems were about love and could be taken to be love between men or between men and women. His job as a poet was not to write specifically heterosexual or homosexual poems' (David Leeming, *Stephen Spender: A Life in Modernism* (London: Duckworth, 1999), pp. 238-239).

The God That Failed.²⁴² His poetry deals with vivid subject-matter (especially in his poems dealing with war and fascism), but is somewhat lacking in terms of linguistic and metrical subtlety.

So ya want to know my lad - die, What

I would have you be, When the world's no more a play - ground, And you're

big and strong like me. When you've got your own free will, lad - when life's no more a jest,

Tin - ker, Tai - lor, Sold - ier, Sai - lor which would please me best? Ah When you're grown up lad - die -

When you're big and tall, to be a Man a tho - rough Man's The

great - est thing of all! Fare and fight life's bat - tles Win them if you can But first

and fore - most lad - die, Be a Man! Be a Man!

Cur - ly head, now don't you wor - ry! - You need - n't scheme and plan. If you

Fig. 44. Henry E. Pether and Leonard Cooke, 'Be a man'.

²⁴² See Richard Crossman (ed), *The God That Failed*, revised edition with introduction by David C. Engerman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 229-273. Spender said amongst other things that 'I was driven on by a sense of social and personal guilt that made me feel firstly that I should take sides, secondly that I could purge myself or an abnormal individuality by cooperating with the Workers' Movement' (p. 272). Spender was also deeply involved with the CIA-funded periodical *Encounter*, though he quit when he discovered the CIA involvement; for more of this, see Leeming, *Stephen Spender*, pp. 170-171, 206-207, John Sutherland, *Stephen Spender: The Authorised Biography* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 438-439, 453, and Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999), pp. 170-178, 388-391.

Finnissy once again generates abstract music using a cipher from Spender's name, whilst carrying over some rhythms from the Frank O'Hara section. He combines these with two British music hall songs from the early twentieth century:²⁴³ 'Young Men Taken In and Done For' (by Harry King),²⁴⁴ and 'Be a Man' (by Henry E. Pether and Leonard Cooke – Fig. 44),²⁴⁵ the latter inserted into the line, retrograded, in *quasi recitativo* fragments from the end of the second verse. The former was transformed into double notes by using a random selection from 42 intervals derived from material in the Kirkup, Cocteau, Chubb, Pasolini and Carpenter sections. The second section combines the two music hall songs in a violent and dissonant manner, hammered out in a way that recalls Finnissy's arrangement of Gershwin's 'Nashville Nightingale' (1990). 'Young Men Taken In and Done For' continues into its refrain in the bass, whilst 'Be a Man', still retrograded form, is in the treble, both harmonised in jarring chords, and with stabbing accentuated *ffff* dynamics. The 'meaning' of this surprising (but short) passage is open to various speculation, perhaps resentment at Spender's having turned his back on the communism and homosexual encounters of his early life, or alternatively a perception of his character in some sense? Whichever, the passage makes for an interesting counterpart with the more flamboyant violence of the first four poets' sections.

The poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca often has an ecstatic and fantastical quality, combining his fascination with the world of the Roma with his wild surrealist associations, as amply shown in his most famous collection *Romancero gitano* (*Gypsy Ballads*) (1928). Lorca worked closely with Manuel de Falla, who took a deep interest in composers' use of folkloristic material (such as Debussy's works with Spanish allusions); together the two collaborated on a thesis on the *cante jondo*. Lorca through his short life sought to create an idiom that was both avant-garde but also rooted in traditional Spanish poetry;²⁴⁶ he also tried to raise money to publish an album of traditional songs from Granada. Finnissy creates his own surrealist tapestry using mostly folk sources. The strongly melodic and tonal nature (mostly in E-flat major) of this section, much of it in monophonic form, highlights the route beyond the somewhat confused nature of the previous melange. The material comes from both Spanish and Basque folk music; the Spanish source is obscure, but the material resembles the Arabic-influenced folk song from Santander, 'Viva la Montaña'²⁴⁷ (Fig. 45). The Basque source material (see. Fig. 7 (d))

²⁴³ There appears to be no evidence of a particular interest in music hall songs on Spender's part, nor of appropriation of the texts in his poetry. I put this question to Finnissy; he replied by suggesting that he was more interested in capturing the spirit of a certain period with which he associated Spender.

²⁴⁴ In Davison, *Songs of the British Music Hall*.

²⁴⁵ In *Masterpieces of Variety Theatre Part 15* (London: Amalgamated Press, 1935). Pether is better known for the songs 'Waiting at the Church' and 'Poor John', both from 1906. He was also a founder of the Performing Rights Society. See Richard Anthony Baker, *British Music Hall: An Illustrated History* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2005), pp. 100, 169. This book gives a good overview of the history of the music-hall and its songs, of which the two used by Finnissy are very representative if little-known today.

²⁴⁶ See Christopher Maurer, 'Introduction', in Federico García Lorca, *Collected Poems*, edited and with an introduction and notes by Christopher Maurer (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1991), pp. xlv-xlvi, l-liv.

²⁴⁷ From Kurt Schindler, *Folk Music and Poetry of Spain and Portugal* (New York: Hispanic Institute in the United States, 1941), song no. 530, cited in Bruno Nettl, *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents*, with chapter on Latin America by Gerard Béhague, third edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), p. 123. Nettl cites the use of a wide degree of ornamentation combined with the lack of a metrical structure as betokening Arabic influences (*ibid.* p. 122); these attributes can be found in numerous of the Santander songs in Schindler's book. Other songs with which Finnissy's material exhibits similarities include the set 'Cantos de danzantes' from Ávila, no. 101 in Schindler.

is a selection of fragments from the ‘Danzas’ (Nos. 1300-1318, sampled randomly) in *Cancionero vasco* by J.A. Donostia.²⁴⁸ These are combined with more fervent passages relating obliquely to (though not directly quoting) Giacinto Scelsi’s piano cycle *Hispaña*, configured with much overlapping of hands in such a manner as to recall the keyboard idioms of Isaac Albeniz (e.g. in ‘Triana’ and ‘Lavapies’ from the *Iberia* cycle). It is followed by a transitional section that effects a quite violent disjuncture with the appearance of an A major triad. This ushers in a series of colonnade-like block chords, many of them triadic (almost certainly selected randomly from a gamut, though this is not shown in the sketches), using these to colour another folksong associated with Lorca.



Fig. 45. Spanish folk song from Santander.

Ralph Chubb was a mystical romantic, a nostalgic who hated science and the contemporary material world, who constructed in his work an immensely elaborate private mythology. Chubb appealed to some form of earlier Arcadia (idealised, as so often²⁴⁹) which was constructed in terms of his own pederastic world-view, speaking of ‘The form of youth without blemish, is not such the form divine? / Children of love, today I will sing my song to you!’²⁵⁰ He sought to legitimise his own desires by evoking images of the Holy Ghost appearing in the form of a naked boy. His work is little known and was issued mostly in limited editions, highly elaborate and beautifully produced books with filled with his own drawings as well as his mythical tales involving himself as some type of spiritual guru. Finnissy finds a musical means to allude to Chubb’s sexual behaviour, by

Federico de Onís points out in his introduction to Schindler’s book how the latter found that ‘the same songs are to be found in the most widely separated regions, which proves that the folk music and poetry of Spain and Portugal have a common background’ (this includes the Basque regions of Spain as well) (p. xxiv). This type of Iberian commonality seems to be exploited, or at least portrayed, in this passage of Finnissy’s.

²⁴⁸ Donostia, *Cancionero vasco*.

²⁴⁹ Though the first appearances of Arcadia in pastoral poetry associate it with poverty and social realism (Theocritus) and then with poverty and open critique (Virgil, whose first Eclogue opens with a discussion of land seizures in order to profit the army). Even traditional English pastoral ‘afforded a way of attacking contemporary political abuses obliquely’ (John Barrell and John Bull (eds), *The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse* (London: Penguin, 1974), p. 6). My thanks to Harry Gilonis for drawing this to my attention.

²⁵⁰ Ralph Chubb, ‘Song of My Soul, 3’ in *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, p. 301.

the use of multiple English folk songs in high registers,²⁵¹ to suggest the voice of treble voices, the upper voice mostly monophonic, the lower one harmonised. Overall the whole section has a pronounced eerie quality which one could read as an expression of a certain disdain and unease on Finnissy's part towards this particular predilection of Chubb.

For the quasi-surrealist polymath Jean Cocteau, Finnissy once more uses two types of material for each hand. For the right hand, this is a plethora of random fragments alluding to music of Satie (including *Parade*), Milhaud and other composers who had collaborated with Cocteau. This hand is all written *piano* and as such is very much overshadowed by the *fortissimo* left, where there is the first composed reference to Alkan's *Jean qui pleure, Jean qui rit*, as used more extensively in *Alkan-Paganini*. Finnissy generates a sequence of eighteen cells, (mostly in two parts), from *Jean qui rit*, constructed in quavers and triplets except for one cell (18), and a further twelve from *Jean qui pleure*, all constructed from semiquavers and triplets. The left hand part is then a simple random sampling of these cells, transposed by various intervals (which seems to reflect a preservation of some sense of stepwise melodic continuity in the top part, albeit with octave skips) and set in the bass register.

Konstantinos Kavafis was born to Greek parents, growing up for a while in Liverpool, England, but later settling in the Greek community in Alexandria, Egypt (which itself has a long mixed heritage – Cleopatra's family were Macedonian Greek),²⁵² where he lived for most of his life. His verse is highly refined (he was a perfectionist) whilst mixing rhymed, regular forms with unrhymed free verse and also *Katharevousa* (an old-fashioned form of 'high' Greek diction) as well as *demotika*, a street language. His poems range from bookish treatments of historical subjects to highly personal pictures of individuals he knew, with the type of gentle homoerotic tone that can also be found in Ancient Greek poetry.²⁵³ This section, which derives from an unpublished solo oboe work written in 1995 for Helen Thomas, then promotions manager at Oxford University Press, is monophonic throughout, deriving from a book of Cretan folk songs²⁵⁴ (see Fig. 7 (d)), which are generally in a declamatory style with heavy, elaborate ornamentation. It is a relatively straightforward section in two parts, the first of which is a rather superficially 'exotic' series of undulations, shifting around various tonal centres, but most prominently around G. The second is more of a dance, with similarly shifting tonalities, fusing the two types of writings towards the conclusion.

Oscar Wilde's life, prose and plays are well-known and need no introduction here. Other than the famous *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, however, his poetry is little-known. Of mixed quality (Wilde himself believed that 'all bad poetry springs from genuine feeling'), his poetry often deals with classical or mythical subject matter intermingled with more rapt and personal lyrics, but generally unimaginative use of tetrametric forms.

²⁵¹ The source of these is obscure – possibly they derive obliquely from the same Lincolnshire collections used later in the Symonds section.

²⁵² My thanks to Harry Gilonis for pointing this out.

²⁵³ See Daniel Mendelsohn, 'Introduction: *The Poet-Historian*', in C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, translated, with introduction and commentary by Daniel Mendelsohn (New York: Random House, 2009), pp. xlii-xlix; also George Kalogeris, 'The Sensuous Archaism of C.P. Cavafy', *The Critical Flame*, September 1st, 2009, at <http://criticalflame.org/the-sensuous-archaism-of-c-p-cavafy/> (accessed 21/8/13).

²⁵⁴ Baud-Bovy, *Chansons Populaires de Crète Occidentale*. Baud-Bovy was a Swiss musicologist and conductor who lived from 1840-1910. This source was also used for Finnissy's later chamber work *Ceci n'est pas d'un forme* (2003).

Finnissy here uses a simple superimposition of two materials once more, the right hand being derived from several Irish folksongs collected in Edward Bunting's *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840),²⁵⁵ specifically 'Páidin Mhac Ruairidhe' (Paddy MacRory) (see Fig. 7 (c)) and 'Conchobhar Macareibhe' (Connor Macareavy) for the first and second sections respectively. The left hand is derived from Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (a favourite opera of Wilde's), in particular from the sextet in Act 1 Scene 4 ('Sei unser, Heinrich!'), using the melodic part in the strings and woodwind, and the bass line in the cellos and basses, in the *molto tenuto* section. For the second section the assignment of material to hand is reversed.

Edward Carpenter was an eccentric English socialist who dabbled in various forms of Eastern mysticism as well as advocating vegetarianism and sandal-wearing. He was an active campaigner for homosexual rights, believing that homosexuals constituted a third sex or 'intermediate sex', which became the title of a book he published on the subject.²⁵⁶ A minor poet, Carpenter's overloaded and somewhat over-earnest verse does not generally succeed in masking a relative dearth of substance and kitsch-like superficiality.

This driving and intense passage is of more interest in terms of the drama of the whole work; with it we are clearly well on the way towards the destructive conclusion. Finnissy once again uses derivations the Music Hall songs from the Spender section, together with a left hand derived from Tchaikovsky's song 'Do Not Leave Me', Op. 27 no. 3 (Fig. 46). The titles alone suggest a combination of dominant impulsiveness combined with self-pity. Yet the former quality is made manifest through the relentless of the left hand, whilst the right hand, in a polyrhythmic relationship to the left (but the former maintaining more of a sense of a regular pulse), has an impassioned expansiveness.

Andante amoroso

p molto espressivo

Oh, nev - er leave me, sweet friend,

what were this life with - out thee! lock'd in thine etc.

Fig. 46. Tchaikovsky, 'Do Not Leave Me', Op. 27 No. 3, text translated by Lady McFarren.

²⁵⁵ Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*.

²⁵⁶ Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women* (Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing Company, 2005).

The work of John Addington Symonds is enormously important in the history of aesthetic writing explicitly dealing with same-sex relationships. Whilst unable to be wholly open about his preferences, on account of the censorious Victorian England in which he lived, Symonds was nonetheless able to drop stronger hints than had previously been possible, in his work on Michelangelo, Benvenuto Cellini (whose *Autobiography* Symonds translated)²⁵⁷ and Walt Whitman, as well as writing an important essay in defence of homosexuality, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1873).²⁵⁸ He also wrote a major seven-volume work on the Italian Renaissance.

The right hand of this section is derived (extremely obliquely) from Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, mostly from the Septet with Chorus, 'Tout n'est que paix' from Act 2, Scene 6 (Symonds was an avid Berlioz-lover) and the left hand from Lincolnshire folk-songs, some of which are included in the collection made by Percy Grainger,²⁵⁹ specifically 'I'm seventeen come Sunday', 'The American Stranger', 'Betsy Walton' (see Fig. 7 (b)), 'Riding down to Portsmouth' and 'The ship that lies in harbour'. Once again, Finnissy included these folksongs simply as they for him evoke a certain archetype of 'Englishness', rather than having any specific relation to Symonds.

Chapter 7: *Eadweard Muybridge-Edvard Munch*

After the rapid cross-cutting of materials and high density of musical information in the *Poets*, the next chapter in the *History*, *Eadweard Muybridge – Edvard Munch*, acts as a huge contrast. Continuing the exploration of 'portraiture' in the two previous chapters, the reasons for combining these two artistic figures are not obvious; whilst their dates overlap to a certain extent (1830-1904 for Muybridge, 1863-1944 for Munch), they remain of different generations, active in very different parts of the Western world, and with very different aesthetic and technical approaches. However, both were in different ways concerned to capture the dynamism of the external world – the former through combination of multiple images, the latter through attempting to capture in still pictures the phenomenon of ongoing motion surrounding the figures portrayed. Finnissy used this piece to attempt to find musical analogues of both of these approaches, and to, in his words, 'play out the conflict between the High Victorian rationality of Muybridge and the expressionistic world of Munch.'²⁶⁰

Muybridge, who lived an eventful life involving a serious stagecoach crash which may have left him with a degree of brain damage, and the shooting dead of his young wife's lover (yet receiving a not-guilty verdict),²⁶¹ became interested in the new medium

²⁵⁷ Benvenuto Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, translated John Addington Symonds (1887) (New York: The Modern Library, 1985).

²⁵⁸ John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics: Studies in Sexual Inversion* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002).

²⁵⁹ Percy Grainger, Patrick O'Shaughnessy (eds), *21 Lincolnshire Folk Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

²⁶⁰ Private conversations with the author. Finnissy's programme note for the *History* describes the two figures as representing 'Abstract structuralism (scientific rationality)' and 'Metaphysical expressionism (emotive irrationality)' respectively.

²⁶¹ For more on Muybridge's life, see Rebecca Solnit, *Motion Studies: Time, Space & Eadweard Muybridge* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), and Philip Prodger, *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Moment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

of photography in his mid-20s.²⁶² He produced spectacular early photographs of natural sites such as those in Yosemite National Park (after returning to America in 1867), clouds and of Native American people (including in the context of the Modoc War between the United States Army and the Native America Modoc tribe, of 1873), as well as of railroads and buildings during various stages of construction. He simultaneously captures inhumane and awe-inspiring nature and the efforts of humankind to develop and build upon the natural world, to 'dominate' nature, as Adorno and Horkheimer might have put it.²⁶³ The impulses to idolise and revere on one hand, and attempt to control and possess on the other, are fundamental to an understanding of Muybridge's work.

Muybridge also became concerned with the exploration of human and animal motion in photography. The Governor of California, Leland Stanford (after whom Stanford University was later named), a lover and owner of horses, had expressed his belief to Muybridge there was a time when a horse had all four hooves off the ground. Wanting to prove this, he hired Muybridge to take pictures of his own champion racehorse 'Occident'.²⁶⁴ By 1877, with the use of drop-shutters, flash, multiple cameras and high-speed shutters, he had succeeded in capturing a horse in motion through a series of still photographs taken at very short intervals. He was soon afterwards to create a whole series entitled *The Attitudes of Animals in Motion*,²⁶⁵ from which 'Occident Trotting' is shown in Fig. 47.

²⁶² The first photograph (involving a negative, as opposed to a daguerreotype), is generally taken to be William Henry Fox Talbot's *Latticed Window* of 1835. Talbot went on to produce a book, *The Pencil of Nature*, in 1844, with photographic illustrations. The *collodion* process, in which wet glass plates were used to produce photographs, was developed by Frederick Scott Archer by 1851, superseded by the dry gelatin plate in the 1870s. See Graham Clarke, *The Photograph: A Visual and Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 15-17 and Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 10-18.

²⁶³ See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'The Concept of Enlightenment', in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated John Cumming (London: Verso, 1997), pp. 3-42.

²⁶⁴ For more details on the interactions between Muybridge and Stanford, see Prodger, *Time Stands Still* pp. 9-23. This book also contains an invaluable earlier history of the Instantaneous Photography Movement (pp. 24-111).

²⁶⁵ See Eadweard Muybridge, *Complete Human and Animal Locomotion*, three volumes (New York: Dover, 1979).

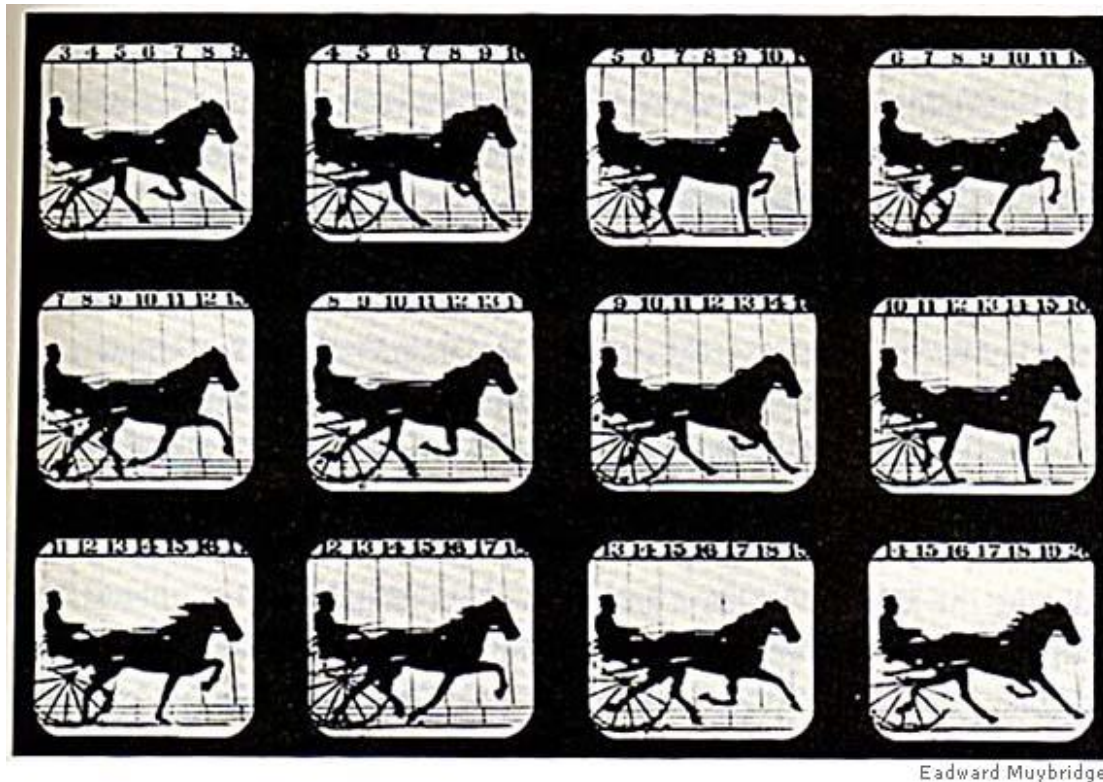


Fig. 47. Eadweard Muybridge, 'Occident Trotting' from *The Attitudes of Animals in Motion* (1881)

A few years later, Muybridge developed a device called the *zoopraxiscope* for projecting multiple images in quick succession, so as to be able to show the horse in motion. This was an early prototype for the cinema projector.²⁶⁶ He continued to develop his innovations and began to photograph nude humans in motion as well,²⁶⁷ including himself as shown in Fig. 48. It is this aspect of his work that is of most interest to Finnissey, to whom such sequences have a curiously lifeless quality of which he sought to obtain a musical analogue.

²⁶⁶ See Mitchell Stephens, *The Rise of the Image, The Fall of the Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 87-88 and for more detail and diagrams, Prodger, *Time Stands Still*, pp. 154-161.

²⁶⁷ See Solnit, *Muybridge*, pp. 220-227.

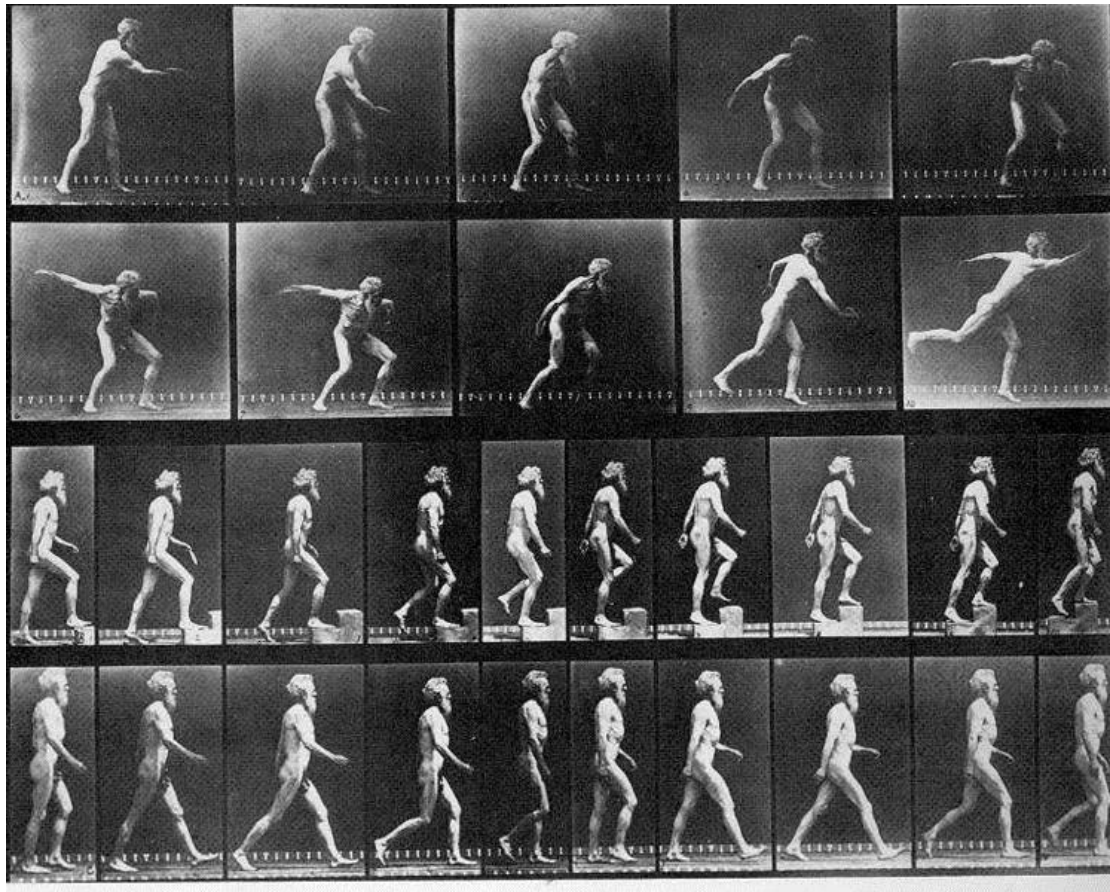


Fig. 48. Eadweard Muybridge – A. *Throwing a Disk*, B: *Ascending a Step*, C: *Walking* from *Animal Locomotion* (1885-1887)

In the first section of *Muybridge-Munch*, Finnissy makes use of musical techniques for capturing other ‘images’ that directly parallel those of Muybridge. The first passage is in four sections. The first, third and fourth of these all directly allude to material from the *Spirituals*, but with an important modification. He divides the material into staggered fragments, so that the ending of one overlaps with the beginning of the next.

The overall structure of the Muybridge section is as follows:

- (i) ‘Steal Away’.
 - (ii) Bruckner 3rd Symphony/Chabrier *L’Étoile* (both composed 1877, the year when Muybridge first succeeded in capturing ‘Occident’ in motion), ‘*without any sense of phrasing or continuity*’. Austere derivation from this material (see Fig. 49) and the *Poets*.
 - (iii) ‘Nobody knows the trouble I see’
- Transition – *Meno mosso*
- (iv) ‘Go Down, Moses’
 - (v) *Presto fuocoso*, ‘*like shattering glass*’. Explosive ‘Compression’ material entirely in the treble at first.
 - (vi) Transition into Munch section.



Fig. 49 (a). Passages from Bruckner Symphony No. 3 alluded to by Finnissy.

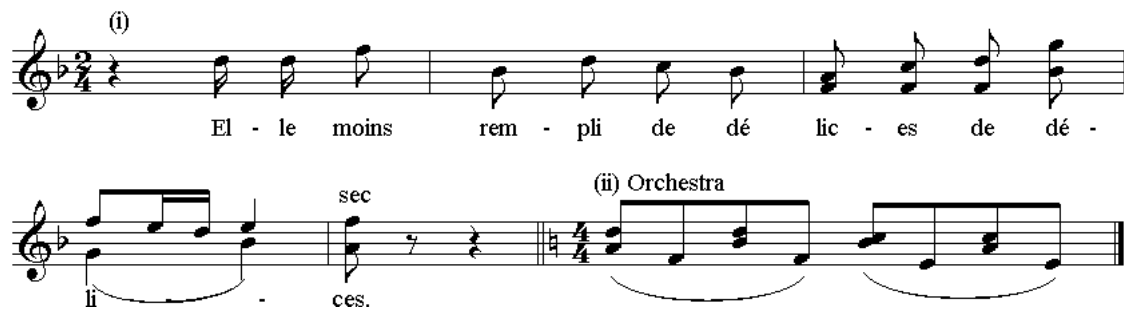


Fig. 49 (b). Passages from Chabrier *L'Étoile* alluded to by Finnissy.

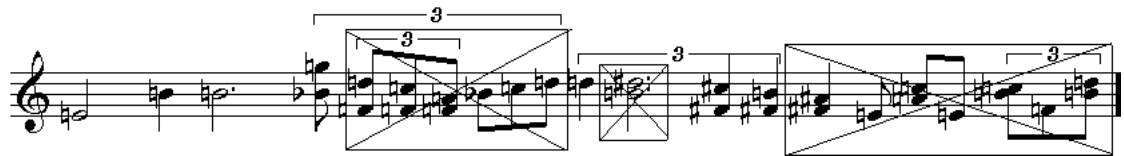


Fig. 49 (c). Combination of retrograded Bruckner and Chabrier in sketches.

Like Muybridge, Edvard Munch also attempted to capture dynamism in still images. He did not simply place his human figures against backgrounds but rather he attempted to represent the energy or force fields surrounding such figures. Munch was obsessed by sickness and death, after an awful series of childhood experiences, including the death of grandmother, mother, aunt and sister all from tuberculosis, and great sickness on Munch's own part.²⁶⁸ Furthermore, Munch's younger sister was diagnosed as mentally ill, and Munch himself may have suffered from bipolar disorder.²⁶⁹ He portrayed nature and the environment as violent and hostile, mankind as lonely and alienated, upon whom psychological violence is enacted by their environment in an often terrifying manner. He was to be highly influential upon the German expressionists of the early 20th century. He described his art as 'a self-confession. Through it, I seek to clarify my relationship with the world. This could also be called egotism. However, I have always thought and felt that my art might be able to help others to clarify their own search for truth'.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ See Poul Erik Tøjner, *Munch: In His Own Words* (Munich, London and New York: Prestel-Verlag, 2001), p. 136, for Munch's own account of his childhood.

²⁶⁹ See Albert Rothenberg, 'Bipolar Illness, Creativity and Treatment', in *Psychiatric Quarterly* Vol. 72 No. 2 (June 2001), pp. 131-147, for an exploration of possible relationships between this aspect of Munch's personality and his work.

²⁷⁰ Cited in Tøjner, *Munch*, p. 135.

Whilst highly successful in his artistic career, Munch's life was profoundly unhappy, succumbing as he did to depression, paranoia and alcoholism.²⁷¹ In 1897, he met Tulla Larsen, the wealthy daughter of a wine merchant, with whom he had an affair, spending plenty of her money in the process. She influenced some of his paintings from around this period, including the renowned *The Dance of Life*, in which she appears in a white dress in the left hand-corner.²⁷² She became eager for her and Munch to marry. Munch, on the other hand, was afraid of marriage, not least as a result of his observations of married experiences of friends and contemporaries (including August Strindberg). He attempted to flee her, though she continued to pursue and attempt to manipulate him in the manner of a stalker,²⁷³ threatening suicide at some points, attempting to blacken his reputation at other times. In 1902, during a meeting between them at her house, in circumstances whose exact nature remain obscure,²⁷⁴ Munch ended up shooting himself in his left hand, ruining his middle finger, an event alluded to in his painting *Death of Marat II* of 1907.²⁷⁵ Where the rationalist Muybridge had pointed his gun outwards at another, the expressionist Munch turned it upon himself.

Munch came to own a small Kodak camera, which he acquired in 1902. He started to take a variety of photographs straight away (despite declaring that 'The camera cannot compete with painting as long as it cannot be used in heaven or hell'),²⁷⁶ in particular a collection which he called *Fatal Destiny*²⁷⁷ compiled from 1902-1908, during the last year of which period he was being treated at a clinic in Copenhagen for *dementia paralytica* induced by alcohol poisoning²⁷⁸ (see Fig. 50).

These works were the primary inspiration for Finnissy. Many of them are self-portraits, employing deliberate (though elementary) techniques for blurring, my moving either himself or the camera, passing a white sheet of paper across the lens during the exposure, or uniting two images by the use of double exposures. The works are as lonely, alienated and intense as his paintings, his human figures (because of the double exposure) having a ghost-like quality.

For this part of the piece, Finnissy uses three Norwegian sources: (a) Grieg's Second Piano Concerto (which only exists in sketch form) (b) the same composer's late folk-music settings *Slåtter* Op. 72 (Fig. 51),²⁷⁹ which had also been used in the first part of Finnissy's longest piano work prior to the *History*, the epic *Folklore*, and (c) a collection of Norwegian folk-songs collected in the nineteenth-century by Ludwig Mathias Lindeman, *Ældre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier* ('Older and newer Norwegian mountain melodies'),²⁸⁰ published in two volumes in 1853 and 1867. Beyond, there are various references to passages from the *Poets*.

²⁷¹ See Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), especially pp. 207-264.

²⁷² Ibid, p. 192.

²⁷³ Ibid. pp. 193-200.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 221-225.

²⁷⁵ See Tøjner, *Munch*, pp. 27-29.

²⁷⁶ Cited in Tøjner, *Munch*, p. 72.

²⁷⁷ Prideaux, *Munch*, pp. 254-257.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 248-249.

²⁷⁹ On nationalistic issues in this work, Ståle Klielberg, 'Grieg's *Slåtter* Op. 72: Change of Musical Style or New Concept of Nationality?', in *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 121 (1996), pp. 46-57.

²⁸⁰ Lindeman, *Ældre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier*.

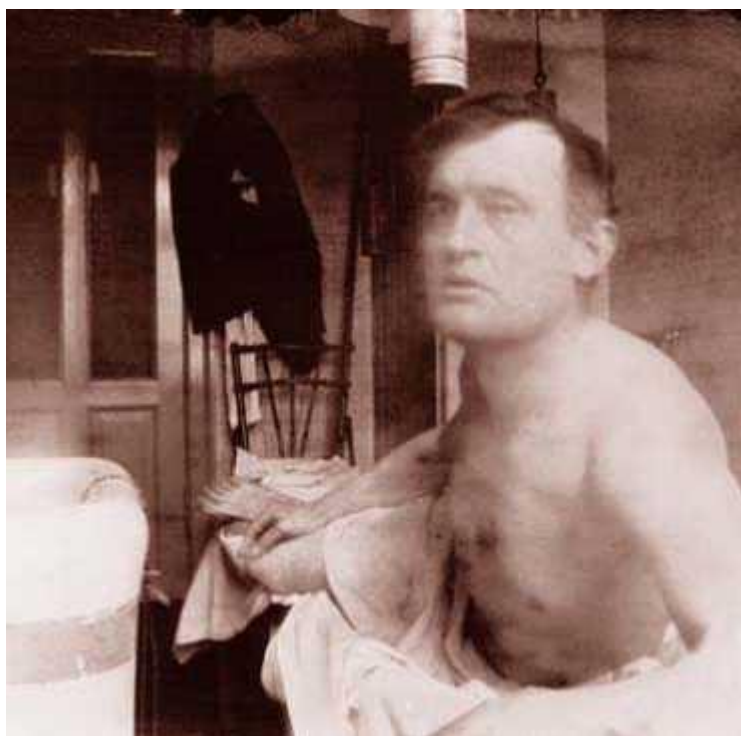


Fig. 50. Edvard Munch, *Edvard Munch à la Marat at Dr. Jacobson's clinic in Copenhagen, 1908-09*.

XVI. Kivlemøyane. Springdans - fragments.

(a) bars 27-28

(b) bars 13-14



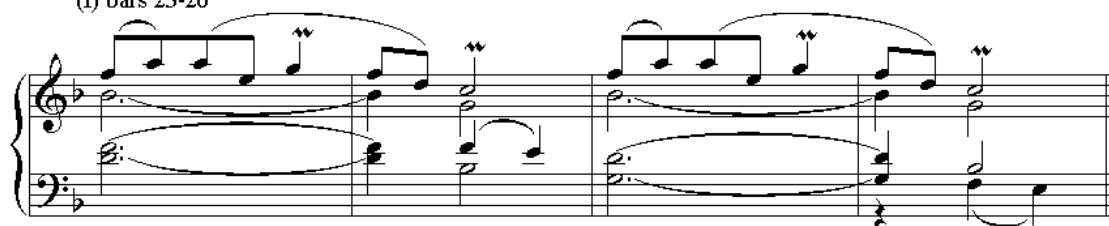
(c) bar 11

(d) bar 39

(e) bar 12



(f) bars 23-26



VI. Myllarguten's Gangar - bars 6-9.

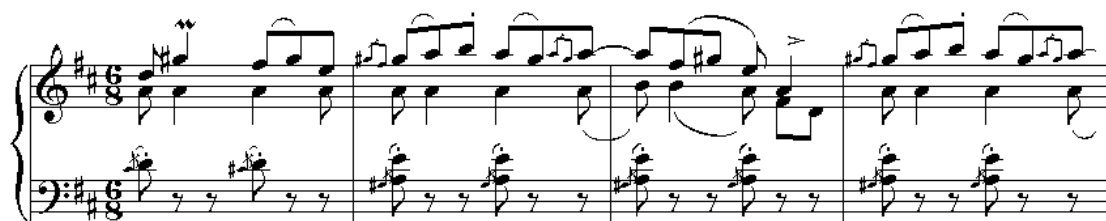


Fig. 51. Fragments from Grieg, *Slåtter*, XVI and VI.

In contradistinction to the Muybridge section, the Munch material is characterised by organic growth and continuity right up until the conclusion. This is achieved through a highly extensive development of a small fragment, thus bringing a highly Germanic Brahmsian technique of ‘developing variation’ to play upon material that some might superficially characterise as belong to a category of ‘nationalist’ music. This fragment comes directly from the sketches for Grieg’s *Second Piano Concerto* in B major, which Grieg worked on in 1882-1883 (Fig. 52). Only a few measures of the first and third movements are known to exist in sketch form²⁸¹, together with a longer tarantella-like passage using a theme not unlike ‘In the Hall of the Mountain King’ from *Peer Gynt*.²⁸²



Fig. 52. Grieg Second Piano Concerto, first movement, opening theme, from sketches.

The wealth of transformational possibilities Finnissy derives from this fragment (or ‘photograph’) are quite remarkable, whilst preserving something of the basic melodic shape, and alternating it with the other Grieg/Lindeman material. At the end of the section, the material shifts markedly, alluding to the triadic section in the *Poets* (P28-29), the first in a series of references to this piece.

For the penultimate section, Finnissy returns to *Slåtter*, here in the clearest and most over-elaborated form yet. Finnissy generated 16 fragments, the first eight of these taken directly from pieces in the cycle, the second eight taken directly from a source book of literal transcriptions of Hardanger fiddle playing (Fig. 53).²⁸³ These are even more extremely ornamented than the transcriptions Grieg used, but still use the basic figurations of the trill and acciaccatura in various ways.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ These are reproduced in Finn Benestad and Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *Edvard Grieg; The Man and the Artist*, translated William H. Halverson and Leland B. Sateren, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988), p. 251.

²⁸² For the full sketches, see <http://www.grieg.be/articles/griegbminor.htm> (accessed 20/7/06).

²⁸³ Levy, *The World of the Gorrlaus*.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. vol. 3, p. 22. As Levy says, ‘Nearly every step in the gorrlaus scale may be embellished with a trill’, giving details of how this is applied to each individual step (pp. 23-28). The ‘typical gorrlaus scale’ that he describes runs from f to b’’ on white notes, with only c’’, f’’ and g’’ raised (p. 11).



Fig. 53. Hardanger fiddle transcription fragments.²⁸⁵

But this rowdy folk-like Arcadia is not to last. Finnissy cuts into it violently with the ‘Compression’ material, now using the whole register of the instrument, all derived from the corresponding section near the end of the *Poets*. The difference here is the fragmentation of the material, which is presented in irregular groups separated by varying silences, coming full-circle back to the opening Muybridge passages in this respect. With some small variation of dynamics, the piece ends with a character of extreme violence and destructiveness, utterly obliterating the momentary ecstasy attained previously.

The value or otherwise of Expressionism (in which category for the purposes of these particular arguments it is fit to include Munch) was hotly debated amongst Marxist aestheticians in the twentieth-century. Indeed the parameters of the debates set the tone for many other disputes on the left on artistic matters. The Hungarian Marxist and proponent of artistic realism György Lukács argued that that ‘Expressionism is grounded in an irrationalist mythology. Its creative style tends towards that of an emotive, rhetorical, vacuous manifesto, a declamatory pseudo-activism...their [the Expressionists’] creative method could without distortion be pressed into the service of that synthesis of decadence and atavism which is the demagoguery of Fascism’.²⁸⁶ The German Marxist Ernst Bloch countered by arguing that Expressionism ‘undermined the schematic routines and academicism to which the ‘values of art’ had been reduced. Instead of eternal ‘formal analyses’ of the work of art, it directed attention to human beings and their substance, in their quest for the most authentic expression possible’.²⁸⁷ Yet from the vantage point of today, when plumbing the depths of human misery has become an affected posture in various strands of popular culture, do many of the claims for Expressionism still hold up, or has such a style and attitude become manneristic (or perhaps has always been thus)? More importantly, does Munch’s work instil a sense of the inevitability and immutability of the bleak world he portrays, thus rendering futile any attempts to change it?

Others, not least Theodor Adorno, have pointed to the potential of dehumanisation in extremely rationalised modes of artistic and other production, by their very neglect of the human factor, or attempts to dominate this. But this need not

²⁸⁵ Ibid. vol. 3, pp. 172, 162.

²⁸⁶ Cited in Ernst Bloch, ‘Discussing Expressionism’ in *Aesthetics and Politics: Debates between Bloch, Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin, Adorno*, with afterword by Frederic Jameson (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 17-18.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 23.

necessarily be used as an indictment of all forms of rationality and scientific processes except to obsessive technophobes.²⁸⁸ If Muybridge's photographic sequences seem lifeless and dehumanising, this need not be endemic to the technical processes he employed, just the rather elementary nature of his technique, quite understandable when such things were very new. And the individual materials as presented in the Muybridge section of this piece may sound bereft, disembodied, withered, void of qualities of warmth or hope (or anger) that they possessed upon their earlier appearance (at least in the case of the spirituals), but the total experience of the section is most certainly 'expressive' in a broader sense (and, for that matter, the aforementioned qualities might also be considered 'expressive'). Finnissy creates a tremendous sense of tension and anticipation through his use of pared-down and fragmented materials, an almost frightening imminence and menace through apprehension of exclusion. Indeed it is one of the most dramatic passages in the whole cycle, so that the appearance of the 'Compression' material is indeed in every sense 'shattering'. The very control, discipline and refinement exercised in the composition of this passage, all products of a rational sensibility, are utterly essential in bringing such an effect about.

In comparison to the work of Muybridge, that of Munch, on the other hand, lacks much in the way of self-reflexivity. His paintings are not realist in the sense of strict representation (which is ultimately an impossibility) but strive to be so in a psychological manner. He captures the effects of external nature upon man's inner nature, in a sometimes terrifying manner, but communicates little sense of man as a social animal. Rather, his individuals are the aloof, alienated beings of romantic mythology, between whom and the rest of society disdain is exchanged in a reciprocal manner. The artistic individual is left to brood, to fear, to wallow in the depths of their solipsistic imagination, cut off from the rest of society's goings-on. His painting of 'Workers Returning Home' (1913-15) certainly captures the sense of defeat, drudgery and dehumanisation etched in the faces of the workers in question, as well as the regimentation of their situation, but it is difficult to credit Munch with a perception of these workers as human beings with the potential, when acting collectively, to change their situation. Indeed to portray historical contingency in such a manner would undoubtedly detract from the pathos which Munch seems to relish.

Finnissy is far too savvy a composer to be content simply with the presentation of neo-Expressionist doom and gloom in the Munch section of this work. From its dark beginnings, the work grows, even flowers, right up to its ecstatic near-conclusion. The sense of atmosphere and colour in the Munch section is captivating, the Hardanger fiddle-like ornamental figurations fully integrated into the whole rather than standing out as exotic curiosities. The inner sense of foreboding, every bit as palpable as that of the Muybridge section (though achieved through radically different means) can genuinely bear comparison with that of a Munch painting. It is as if the themes develop against an ominous backdrop that initially dwarfs them and against which they are played off from beginning to end. But this is not simply some contest between unequals; it is precisely

²⁸⁸ Terry Eagleton (in 'Art after Auschwitz', in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 358-359) cites one of Adorno's most ridiculous comments, in which he claims that the introduction of automated window opening mechanisms and other domestic developments are symptomatic of 'the violent, hard-hitting, unrelenting jerkiness of Fascist maltreatment' (Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 1978), p. 40). Eagleton quite reasonably characterises this as 'one of his tiresome bouts of *haut-bourgeois* anti-technological nostalgia'.

when the diatonic Griegian material at the end seems to have relegated the lower part merely to the status of an accompaniment that Finnissy, in a wholly calculated manner, steps in to effect a violent change of texture. Finnissy's musical *materials* in this section may have the ambience of Norwegian neo-Expressionism, but his structural grammar is borne out of a refined rational and modernist sensibility. And the passage can also be appreciated in terms of the technical virtuosity of its composition, somewhat offsetting its initially ominous mood.

To set the work up as presenting the ultimate supremacy of the 'emotive' over the 'rational' would be an extremely simplistic interpretation; whilst the two sections are wholly different on the surface, some attributes of each one infiltrate the other. Finnissy combines a type of musical naturalism with thoroughly artificial structural and dramatic devices. But each of these aspects of the music feeds off the other. The 'Compression' material at the end of the *Poets* makes an impact, but nothing like as powerful as that in *Muybridge-Munch*. This is because rapid shifts of highly diverse material occur throughout the *Poets*, so the shift to the 'Compression' is not such a big surprise. The corresponding moments in *Muybridge-Munch*, however, come at the end of long continuous expanses of material (notwithstanding the fragmentation in the *Muybridge* section), so the impact is all the more startling. Yet there is a sense in which the final 'Compression' passage could also be heard as 'growing out of' the overloaded textures of the passage that precedes it, so the relationship between structure and organic growth of material may not be wholly estranged.

Chapter 8: *Kapitalistisch Realisme (mit Sizilianische Männerakte und Bachsche Nachdichtungen)*

*Kapitalistisch Realisme*²⁸⁹ is by far the longest chapter of the *History*, but nonetheless relatively straightforward to apprehend and follow, at least on some levels. In essence it consists of three large sections connected by two interludes. The first and last of these sections are unified by long threads of material that run throughout – in the case of the first music derived from three works of Beethoven, for the last the *Pezzo Serioso* from Busoni's Piano Concerto, in retrograde form. The middle section consists of a series of Bachian canonic and other elaborations, mostly upon the *motivo fondamentale*. Thus we have a new set of 'the three B's' – Beethoven, Bach and Busoni, each informing a large-scale section.

No composer occupies a more iconic status within the history of classical music than Ludwig van Beethoven. The opening motive of the Fifth Symphony in particular has a strong claim to being the most infamous gesture of the whole repertoire. Beethoven lies at the centre of most canonical education about music; arguably the ideals supposedly made manifest in his work continue to serve as a model for music right up to the present day.

²⁸⁹ The title of this work, and of *Wachtend*, are in Flemish, reflecting the fact that Finnissy was teaching the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* when writing both pieces. Whilst the term 'Capitalist Realism' was not new, having been used at least as early as 1963, for an exhibition in Düsseldorf featuring the work of Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke and others, and more recently in Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), Finnissy claims that he arrived at it independently ("capitalism" seen as a political system which manipulates and distorts perception, particularly through advertising and the media, so only a variant, and in my view an aberrant and dangerous variant, version of "reality" – e-mail to the author, 22/8/13).

But it has not always been thus, and such an interpretation would likely have surprised many of his contemporaries. Inspired and influenced by the revolutionary and democratic ideals of his time, especially the overthrow of feudalism in the French Revolution, Beethoven is frequently seen as emblematic of the musical embodiment of wider social processes of his time. Such a conception has traditionally been viewed in terms of various paradigms, involving notions of individualism, nationalism, heroism and humanism, upon which are mapped the Enlightenment/Romanticism or Classicism/Romanticism dichotomies. In many ways the issues that have been most hotly debated in recent times were set down in a seminal important 1813 essay on the Fifth Symphony by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann traced the development from Haydn and Mozart to Beethoven, but found in the latter 'the realm of the monstrous and the immeasurable' and 'the lever of fear, of awe, of horror, of suffering', thus calling Beethoven 'a completely romantic composer'.²⁹⁰

While this view was by no means generally accepted during much of the nineteenth century, standing at some distance from other Germanic views including the important writings of Adolf Bernhard Marx,²⁹¹ it has become prevalent in the twentieth. Amongst standard texts in English of the post-war era that link this sort of radical and intransigent individualism to the wider political events of Beethoven's era is that of Reinhard G. Pauly, who writes that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries 'Political leaders...were well aware that music could become a powerful tool of the new state' and that:

Music no longer existed for the entertainment of a privileged class of society but was to have higher purposes: to arouse patriotism, to serve the state and, ultimately, humanity.²⁹²

In the specific case of Beethoven, Pauly asserts that while he 'embraced the ideas of the Enlightenment wholeheartedly, he was not an outspoken opponent of the monarchy and he abhorred the extremes of the French Revolution', though:

Liberté, égalité, fraternité – Beethoven welcomed the tenets of the French Revolution. For him, as for the nineteenth century in general, they led to a changed view of the artist as one who, by virtue of ability and genius, belonged to the highest order of society, equal if not superior to kings and princes. That Beethoven had strong feelings on this subject is evident from his relations to his noble patrons. Much of the help he received from them, financial and otherwise, he seems to have accepted as something that society owed to him as an artist. Certainly he did not show himself overly thankful.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Instrumental Music' (1813), in Oliver Strunk (ed), *Source Readings in Music History*, revised edition by Leo Treitler (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 1195.

²⁹¹ For a good view of critical opinion on Beethoven, including Hoffmann and Marx, see Robin Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Wallace points out from the outset that Hoffmann 'is in many ways the least representative of all the authors we shall examine' (p. 1). Carl Dahlhaus points out that 'the categorical model which underlies that essay is by no means confined to Beethoven in other writings by Hoffmann', citing other comparable writing by Hoffmann on Spontini, for example. See Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, translated Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 70.

²⁹² Reinhard G. Pauly, *Music in the Classic Period*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, NK: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 187 (originally published in 1965).

²⁹³ Ibid, pp. 194-195.

Later commentators, such as William Kinderman,²⁹⁴ have echoed this type of view. Barry Cooper argues that while Beethoven believed in 'a kind of meritocracy, in which those who were noble in spirit', including himself, 'belonged to an élite class', that 'his disdain of the working classes was frequently evident' and of French Revolutionary ideals, he supported 'Equality not at all, and Fraternity only in a limited way'.²⁹⁵ Various others have expressed similar views, including Maynard Solomon²⁹⁶ and Sanna Pederson.²⁹⁷

Nicholas Marston, in examining the place of Beethoven within constructions of a nineteenth-century 'age of Romanticism' or an eighteenth-century 'age of reason', warns against 'the temptation to give too much credence to such broad generalizations when dealing with the history of ideas'.²⁹⁸ Nonetheless, Marston articulates a common view when arguing that 'there is one broad shift in musical aesthetics' which is 'crucial to contemporary and later responses to Beethoven's music'. This shift is away from an eighteenth-century view of music as 'well suited to expressing the passions or emotions', which 'likewise could arouse similar emotions in the hearer'. Also, because of 'the low specificity of musical representation of musical representation, and more particularly the inability of music to express moral concepts', music 'needed to be allied to words'. By contrast, in the nineteenth century:

Ideals of universality, rationality and clarity yielded to a way of thinking that placed the highest value on individuality, irrationality and obscurity. In place of the belief that absolute truth and knowledge were attainable came the opposite belief, that these concepts could never be attained. The Romantic artist strove towards the infinite, which he would never reach; and the struggle gradually became more important than the goal itself.²⁹⁹

But these various conceptions remain individualistic and biographically-focused, concentrating as they do on Beethoven's own intentions, wishes and self-conception, rather than possible meanings of the work itself in terms of its social context, which may or may not correspond to such intentions (if the latter are really of such great consequence). Solomon certainly takes into account economic factors, as impact upon Beethoven's wishes and career,³⁰⁰ but not specifically the work. Theodor Adorno, on the other hand, recognises the combination of emancipation and new forms of bondage that were brought about by the new economic position of the composer who must ply their wares in the open market.³⁰¹ He argues that:

²⁹⁴ William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 3.

²⁹⁵ Barry Cooper, 'Politics', in Cooper (ed), *The Beethoven Compendium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 145.

²⁹⁶ See Maynard Solomon, 'Beethoven's *Magazin der Kunst*', in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 203.

²⁹⁷ Sanna Pederson, 'Beethoven and Masculinity' in Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 322.

²⁹⁸ Nicholas Marston, 'Intellectual currents: philosophy and aesthetics', in Barry Cooper (ed), *The Beethoven Compendium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 62.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 63.

³⁰⁰ See Solomon, 'Beethoven's *Magazin der Kunst*', p. 200-201. Similar problems are inherent in Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna 1792-1803* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

³⁰¹ Theodor W. Adorno, "Soziologische Anmerkungen zum deutschen Musikleben", in *Deutscher Muskrat, Referate Informationen* 5 (February 1967), pp. 2 ff. cited in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, translated E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 208.

If he [Beethoven] is the musical prototype of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, he is at the same time the prototype of a music that has escaped from its social tutelage and is esthetically fully autonomous, a servant no longer. His work explodes the schema of a complaisant adequacy of music and society. In it, for all its idealism in tone and posture, the essence of society, for which he speaks as the vicar of the total subject, becomes the essence of music itself. Both are comprehensible in the interior of the works only, not in mere imagery. The central categories of artistic construction can be translated into social ones. The kinship with that bourgeois libertarianism which rings all through Beethoven's music is a kinship of the dynamically unfolding totality. It is in fitting together under their own law, as becoming, negating, confirming themselves and the whole without looking outward, that his movements come to resemble the world whose forces move them; they do not do it by imitating that world.³⁰²

The consolidation of power on the part of the bourgeoisie requires ultimately a renunciation of the egalitarian ideals upon which their revolution was built, ideals which are incompatible with the exploitation of labour in the interests of capital. As Adorno puts it, the revolutionary bourgeoisie 'cannot yield, unfettered, to its own dynamics without voiding itself', and thus that 'bourgeois society is exploded by its own immanent dynamics – this is imprinted in Beethoven's music, the sublime music, as a trait of esthetic untruth: by its power, his successful work of art posits the real success of what was in reality a failure, and that in turn affects the declamatory moments of the work of art'.³⁰³

This powerful analysis of processes at play in terms of the changing nature of bourgeois subjectivity as manifested through art, resounds strongly with the sentiments expressed by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*:

In modern times the philosophy of enjoyment arose with the decline of feudalism and with the transformation of the feudal landed nobility into the pleasure-loving and extravagant nobles of the court under the absolute monarchy. Among these nobles this philosophy still has largely the form of a direct, naive outlook on life which finds expression in memoirs, poems, novels, etc. It only becomes a real philosophy in the hands of a few writers of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, who, on the one hand, participated in the culture and mode of life of the court nobility and, on the other hand, shared the more general outlook of the bourgeoisie, based on the more general conditions of existence of this class. This philosophy was, therefore, accepted by both classes, although from totally different points of view. Whereas among the nobility this language was restricted exclusively to its estate and to the conditions of life of this estate, it was given a generalised character by the bourgeoisie and addressed to every individual without distinction. The conditions of life of these individuals were thus disregarded and the theory of enjoyment thereby transformed into an insipid and hypocritical moral doctrine. When, in the course of further development, the nobility was overthrown and the bourgeoisie brought into conflict with its opposite, the proletariat, the nobility became devoutly religious, and the bourgeoisie solemnly moral and strict in its theories, or else succumbed to the above-mentioned hypocrisy, although the nobility in practice by no means renounced enjoyment, while among the bourgeoisie enjoyment even assumed an official, economic form — that of *luxury*.³⁰⁴

What both Marx and Engels and later Adorno identified were ways in which certain processes and aesthetics as embodied in cultural production come to assume quite

³⁰² Ibid. p. 209, also printed in Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, edited Rolf Tiedemann, translated Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 43.

³⁰³ Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 46/*Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, p. 214.

³⁰⁴ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 'St Max' from *The German Ideology*, available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch03n.htm> (accessed 3/11/13).

different meanings in light of changing historical circumstances), and how this reflects back on the aesthetic consciousness of the artist.

In recent times, a fair amount of Anglo-American musicology has concentrated on attacking notions such as heroism, subjectivity, individualism and autonomy such are associated frequently with Beethoven's music. The most intelligent of this work, such as Scott Burnham's *Beethoven Hero*,³⁰⁵ traces the persistent trope of the 'heroic' in terms of Beethoven's mid-period work, combining detailed analysis of a few pieces, in particular the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphonies with a study of reception history (in particular how 'Beethoven reception treats Beethoven himself as the subject of his heroic-style works'),³⁰⁶ to examine why this trope has proved so durable, concluding that:

The components of the value system that Beethoven's music has come to represent include the central position of man as an individual and the corresponding emphasis on selfhood and self-consciousness, as well as the epistemological change from fixed truth to dynamic truth, as witnessed by the burgeoning influence of Christian eschatology (linear history with a telos), the importance of individual freedom (the ability to create one's own future), the romantic emphasis on becoming, and the change in philosophical method from syllogism to dialectic.³⁰⁷

But such conceptions are viewed disdainfully by various figures associated with the 'New Musicology', who have sought to describe these paradigms primarily in terms of reified conceptions of gender and sexuality.³⁰⁸ Many of these writers fixate in particular on the use of gendered terms to assign musical value, but usually simply reverse their valorisation, rather than attempting to sublimate such hackneyed and simplistic categories themselves. In such a context, it is not surprising that anything that has ever been called 'heroic' would be viewed negatively.

The meanings of heroic and individualistic conceptions in Beethoven's own time remain important in terms of viewing his later relevance. Indeed I would go further in asserting the primary significance of such an approach, for the reasons articulated by Walter Benjamin in the sixth of his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History':

Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

³⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 157. Lewis Lockwood, however, points out the problems in defining Beethoven's mid-period as characterised by the 'heroic style', as in the work of Burnham and others, showing how it necessitates an exclusive focus on just a few works, discounting others that are 'primarily lyrical, intimate, and expansive', such as the Violin Concerto, Fourth Piano Concerto or "Archduke" Trio. See Lockwood, 'Beethoven, Florestan, and the Varieties of Heroism', in Burnham and Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World*, especially pp. 36-41, also Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: Norton, 2003), pp. 209-214.

³⁰⁷ Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, p. 157.

³⁰⁸ See for example Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), p. 22; Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 69; Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 138-139; Pederson, 'Beethoven and Masculinity', p. 326.

³⁰⁹ Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, edited with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, translated Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 257.

The individualistic and the heroic were indeed deeply radical principles in Beethoven's time, signifying the ideals of historical change and emancipation from feudalism. Marx used up a good deal of ink praising the achievements of the bourgeoisie in this respect,³¹⁰ whilst at the same time decrying the reaction that set in as they consolidated their position and refused to extend their own achievements to the proletariat (or, by and large, to women and other oppressed groups), arguing that the bourgeoisie has 'forged the weapons that bring death to itself' and well as calling into existence 'the men who are to wield those weapons – the modern working class – the proletarians'.³¹¹ To view Beethovenian heroism and individualism relative to the feudal role for artistic production is to see them as part and parcel of historical *process*, rather than in their later reified form. As the former, they are surely positive aspects to these, unless one adheres to a neo-feudalist position.

I cannot speak for sure about the extent to which Finnissy consciously intended *Kapitalistisch Realisme* to engage with these issues in the manner I have described them, but can consider the extent to which it embodies them. To do so, we must of course first consider the details of the music. Finnissy takes three works of Beethoven as his thread, all associated with the number five, specifically the String Quartet in A major Op. 18 No. 5, the Fifth Piano Sonata in C minor Op. 10 No. 1, and the Fifth Symphony Op. 67 (derived in this case from Liszt's version of the work for solo piano).

At the very outset of the work, Finnissy presents the opening motive from the Fifth Symphony in no uncertain terms, for the first time since *Le démon*. Whilst maintaining the repeated Gs in the treble, the fall of a major third occurs low on the bass, between relatively dissonant chords, the top note of the concluding chord forming a major seventh relationship with the sustained G. A second partial iteration resolves onto a perfect fourth, then the third, with a drastic *rallentando*, shifts to a what enharmonically is a major sixth between A# in the bass and G in the treble, the former then able to resolve onto the A major of the music that follows, but through an extremely weak cadence. It is as if it is dragged towards this next passage as the assertiveness of the opening cadences is dissipated.

The whole first section is structured into seven pairs of material, the first also marked *Maestoso*, the second *Distantly reflecting*, a short rapid interlude (with further rapid gestures referring to the Fifth Symphony), then a further four such pairs of material. A steady pulse of crotchet = 80 is maintained throughout, except for during the interlude and during the last of the first seven *Maestoso* sections, lending the whole long section a strong sense of an unstoppable march.

The first material in the bass comes directly from the Finale of Beethoven's Op. 18 No. 5 (Fig. 54). Taking the material at the *Maestoso* tempo, crotchet = 80, rather than Beethoven's tempo of *Allegro* within *alla breve* (Finnissy maintains the *alla breve* time signature in the bass, but it is hard to see how this would be perceivable at that tempo),

³¹⁰ Most obviously in the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party'. See Robert C. Tucker (ed), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 335-362.

³¹¹ Ibid. p. 340. Note that while Marx uses the term 'men' here, he argues soon afterwards that 'the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex' (p. 352). Whilst there is obviously a good deal of scope for disagreement as to whether this is really valid in light of the strategies the bourgeoisie have employed to divide the proletariat, it does suggest that 'the men who are to wield those weapons' might not be seen in a strictly gendered sense.

Finnissy extracts from the lower parts a type of march-like pattern at the outset, with strong *sforzandi*. The right hand, however, is derived from a different source: a series of fragments selected randomly from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (see Fig. 3 (d)) organised into ten sections. Finnissy uses his usual methods of rhythmic distortion, pitch modification and octave transposition to abstract this material from its more obvious tonal properties, giving it a hyper-chromatic and somewhat flamboyant quality. This contrasts very strongly with the more restricted tessitura of the bass line, as an accompaniment figure.



Fig. 54. Beethoven String Quartet Op. 18 No. 5, Finale.

The incessant nature of the Beethovenian left hand, emphasising the regular pulse, even martial, provides a foundation or *cantus firmus* upon which the passionate and highly chromatic Wagner material can be conceived as a type of overgrowth (though the two types of material are not directly related, nor sound as such). The right hand is certainly quite overwhelming and dominant (and gives a somewhat top-heavy feel to the passage), yet is given shape, or 'grounding', by virtue of its contrast with the bass, which provides tonal centres and a pulse against which it can be measured. Finnissy manipulates the top line (and occasionally the bottom one) to create the strongest dissonances, rhythmic disjunction and sometimes composite partial harmonic progressions.

If the *Maestoso* material is affirmative and relentless, the *Distantly reflecting* passages, always at a very quiet dynamic, are hushed and visionary, and generally use the less dense Wagner-derived material. Subsequent sections see the carrying over of Beethovenian offbeat *sforzandi* into the quieter material, the evocation of a characteristic motive (in distorted form) from the jubilant scenes between Siegfried and Brunnhilde from the Prelude of *Götterdämmerung*, and shifting foregrounding between the hands, especially when one or the other goes silent, in a manner reminiscent of Ives's overlaying of materials. When drawing upon the Beethoven Sonata in C minor op. 10, no. 1, Finnissy presents little more than a bare harmonic outline, in itself hardly very noteworthy until

the transitional section begins, at which point Finnissy combines with more of the ostentatious Wagner material (coming after an extremely sparse preceding section, then new material (in the form of triplet crotchets) mined from Bruckner's Fifth Symphony (some of which appeared earlier in *Le démon*). From Beethoven's own Fifth Symphony (for which Finnissy uses as a source the piano transcription of Liszt) (Fig. 55), the selection of material is as arcane as possible, so as to obfuscate easy recognition of the source, though a window is opened up in the texture by Finnissy's allusion to the passage in the development section of this symphony in minims, bars 196-227. These minims' larger-than-life character (as if imposed from without rather than springing organically from the demands of the material – even though they develop earlier short sequences of minims, the scale on which they are elaborated here has a markedly inorganic quality), or what Adorno called 'a holding of the breath',³¹² are foregrounded as a result of the fragmentary nature of the bass.

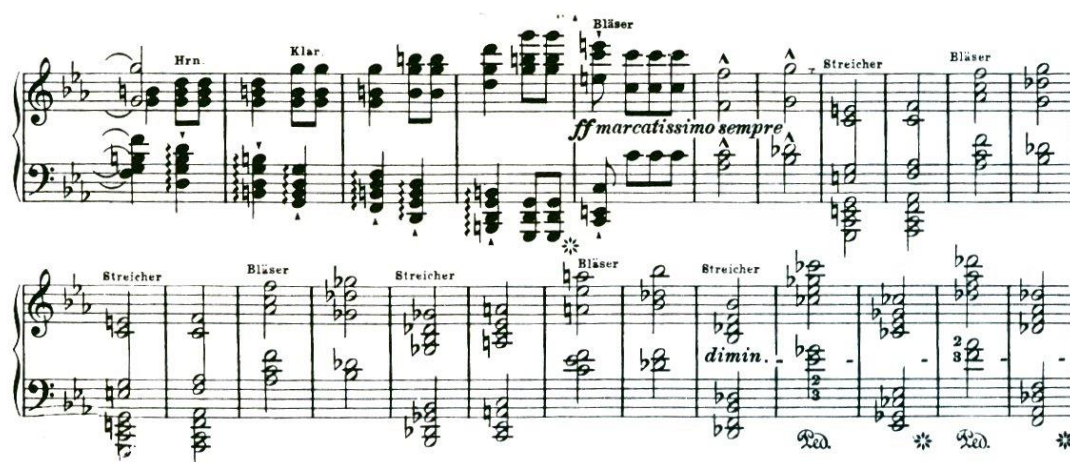


Fig. 55. Beethoven-Liszt, Symphony No. 5, from development section, bars 191-214.

Whilst Finnissy begins to reference material from elsewhere in the cycle, all the time the Beethoven line forces its way onwards despite its continual recontextualisation by the material around it. In the process it becomes distorted in various ways, but never really loses the sense of rootedness in A-flat. Ultimately the section comes to a hold on a sustained d'', a little in the manner of a resolution.

If one considers the work as taking as its starting point Beethoven simply as representative of the archetype of the composer under capitalism, then works around

³¹² Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 107. Others interpreted this section differently; A.B. Marx saw it in terms of formal necessity so that, as paraphrased by Robin Wallace, 'tension, of a dramatic if not a tonal variety, must increase constantly as the movement goes on; and given that it is a piece in sonata form, both types of tension must reach a momentary climax just before the return of the principal theme. Thus, somewhat irrationally, music which is clearly anticipatory in nature is made to bear the burden of carrying the struggle forward.' (*Beethoven's Critics*, p. 133). Berlioz used a poetic metaphor closer to that of Adorno, by comparing the passage to 'the painful breathing of a dying man' (*ibid.* p. 134). E.T.A. Hoffmann would surely have had this passage in mind when he talked about how 'the constant repetition of single phrases and chords, which intensifies to the highest possible degree the feeling of ineffable yearning' (Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Instrumental Music', in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism*, edited David Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 99 and described the latter part of the section as having an 'ominous, eerie effect' (Hoffmann, 'Beethoven's Fifth Symphony', *ibid.* p. 243).

the intrinsic properties of the music itself, the character is one of profound optimism and confidence that somehow seem much more than simply idle affectations. For the first time in the whole cycle, Finnissy has a long passage with stable tonal centres over extended periods, despite all the efforts to disrupt them through other parts. There is also to a very large degree a consistent pulse (notwithstanding the few areas of modification, which only ultimately serve to heighten the sense of reaffirmation afterwards) and an emphatic assertion of that very pulse. The contrasts between dynamics are stark and equally emphatic, simply embodied through the alternating sections. The rawness of the music, in such a way as seems to exclude the purely decorative or any connotations of aestheticism, is quite uncharacteristic for Finnissy. Even the Wagnerian flamboyance seems quite unaffected in its nature. Heroism in the face of adversity (a metaphor I do not ultimately accept to be innately gendered, despite the fact that it has been appropriated in such a manner) seems an appropriate description of this epic music. Another quote from Dahlhaus, about Beethoven, seems to encapsulate some of the factors at play in this work:

The formal principle that laid the foundations for the 'heroic style' was the idea of drawing the 'revolutionary tone' into a complicated formal dialectics, despite the fact that, in the tradition going back to Gluck, the revolutionary ideal had previously been characterized by emphatic simplicity, and by a vigorous cultivation of simplicity and the elemental. As he entered on the 'new path', Beethoven found the way to mediate between concrete and abstract thematic procedure: that is, between apparently simple and latently complex structures. But with that the connection between the growing sophistication of the form and the 'heroic style' becomes apparent: for, in so far as the style is symphonic and not merely martial, it needed the inner complement of a tendency towards the esoteric as part of its means of expression.³¹³

Profoundly Beethovenian in its unfatalistic nature and its mediation between the 'apparently simple' and the 'latently complex' in its structure, and the offsetting of what might have been 'martial' with a 'tendency towards the esoteric', this section is nonetheless to be followed by something extremely different.

Finnissy then employs a rearrangement of the Sardinian Pasolini music, which will also feature prominently in the *Sizilianische Männerakte* section later (intermingled with selections from the collection entitled *Sizilianische Volkslieder*, compiled by Giacomo Meyerbeer),³¹⁴ to effect a transition to a near verbatim repetition of the *Poets* et al derived section in *Le réveil* (sections B1-B3). Finnissy cuts into the end of the final Cocteau section with a short premonition of a passage in *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* (arcane-sounding there, but somehow less out of place here) which combines a Bach chorale prelude, the folk songs 'Lu Ruggeri' and 'Canzona Palermitana' (which have both already been heard at the beginning of the transition) and the 'Choeur Infernale' from Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers*. From this he shifts to an inverted version of the O'Hara material heard within the previous section and then into full rendition of most of the first half of the Kirkup material from the *Poets*.

Bachsche Nachdichtungen (which Finnissy translates as 'Bach-ian post-poesis')³¹⁵ also exists as an independent piece which was completed in 2000, the 250th anniversary of

³¹³ Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven*, p. 19.

³¹⁴ Meyerbeer, *Sizilianische Volkslieder*.

³¹⁵ Finnissy, programme note for *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. It is most likely that Finnissy got the idea for this title from the passage in Anthony Beaumont's book on Busoni, where he describes the *Fantasia after J.S. Bach* as 'a new genre of composition, the *Nachdichtung*. This almost untranslatable term,

Bach's death. Finnissey's area of focus here is not simply Bach's own music, but also the work of those who transcribed him for piano, in particular Ferruccio Busoni and Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji. Most clearly, this section of the work stands as a homage both to Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge* and Busoni's *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, itself in part a completion and elaboration around the 'Contrapunctus XIV' from the Bach work. The importance of Busoni as an influence on Finnissey should not be underestimated. As well as being a passionate lover of many aspects of Busoni's work since young days, he has repeatedly cited Busoni's thoughts on transcription and notation in the context of his own work (specifically that 'notation is itself the transcription of an abstract idea. The moment that the pen takes possession of it the thought loses its original form').³¹⁶ Busoni is a recurring presence in Finnissey's revised set of the *Verdi Transcriptions*, with pieces in each of the four books referring to the *Indianisches Tagebuch*, First Sonatina, the *An die Jugend*, and the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, whilst at one point Finnissey planned a set of piano studies alluding on various levels to Busoni's *Klavierübung*. Busoni's sense of free fantasy, exploration of highly individualised keyboard virtuosity, experimental late-tonal or post-tonal harmony and combining of distinct stylistic worlds (specifically the German and the Italian) all find parallels throughout Finnissey's output. And Bach of course looms large in Busoni's life and work, composing a range of transcriptions of Bach organ chorale preludes, preludes and fugues and other works, the famous D-minor Chaconne, as well as a series of freer works relating to Bach. On top of this, Busoni edited a massive eight-volume edition of both his own transcriptions and Bach's original works for keyboard – the latter with elaborate editorial suggestions that practically amount to a rewriting themselves.³¹⁷ The 'Bach' that inhabits *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* is heavily filtered through his successive reworkings and reinterpretations in the hands of later composers, above all Busoni.

At the heart of the work are four of Bach's organ chorale preludes, BWV 717, 716, 662 and 677, all based upon the chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'*. These are interwoven with a range of different types of canons and free fantasies, generally based upon the *motivo fondamentale*, alluding to a range of different styles. Equally important is the Lutheran chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'*, which was also used by Busoni for the third of his *Elegies* – which itself formed the opening section of the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*³¹⁸. This is the German version of the Gregorian chant *Gloria in excelsis* from the Latin Late Medieval Liturgy, which was probably adapted to the new text by the 15th century monk, hymn-writer and composer Nikolaus Decius. Fig. 56 gives two versions of this that Bach might have known, and one compiled by the *Neue Bach-*

meaning neither paraphrase nor transcription, implies a reconstruction of an original text in another language or style.' See Beaumont, *Busoni* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 137.

³¹⁶ Ferruccio Busoni, 'Value of the Transcription' in *The Essence of Music and other papers*, translated Rosamond Ley (New York: Dover, 1965), p. 87. For Finnissey's thoughts on this, see Toop, 'Four Facets of the New Complexity', p. 9.

³¹⁷ For an overview of Busoni's works relating to Bach, see Beaumont, *Busoni*, pp. 269-273, and H.H. Stuckenschmidt, *Ferruccio Busoni*, translated Sandra Morris (London: Calder and Boyars, 1970), pp. 105-108. Also see Kenneth Hamilton, 'The virtuoso tradition' in David Rowland (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 66-67 for a look at Busoni's rewritings of Bach in his editions. A selection of Busoni's thoughts on Bach can be found in *The Essence of Music*, pp. 96-103.

³¹⁸ See Beaumont, *Busoni*, pp. 107-108, and Larry Sitsky, *Busoni and the Piano: The Works, the Writings and the Recordings* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 151.

Ausgabe from its use in various of Bach's works.³¹⁹ Bach harmonised this chorale for four voices in BWV 260, and it is used in the cantata 'Ich bin ein guter Hirt', BWV 85, in 'Du Hirte Israel, höre', BWV 104, in two movements of 'Der Herr is mein getreuer Herr', BWV 112, and in 'Auf Christi Himmelfahrt', BWV 128. The organ chorale preludes that Finnissey alludes to constitute just four out of a total of ten which use this melody (the others being BWV 663, 664, 675, 676 (all Leipzig chorales, like BWV 662 and 667), 711 and 715). There was no other chorale melody that Bach set so often.³²⁰ Throughout *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, this chorale thus alternates with the *motivo fondamentale*.



Fig. 56 (a). *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, from early 17th century hymnal.

Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr
Vopelius 1682

Al - lein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr
dar - um, daß nun und nim - mer - mehr

und Dank für sei - ne Gna - de,
uns rüh - ren kann kein Scha - de.

Ein Wohl - ge - falln Gott an uns hat; nun ist groß Fried ohn Un - ter - laß,

all Fehd hat nun ein En - de.

Fig. 56 (b). *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, in the Vopelius hymnal of 1682.

³¹⁹ All taken from <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/CM/Allein-Gott-in-der-Hoh.htm#Composition> (accessed 3/11/13). More information about the various stages by which the original Gregorian melody became transformed into the Lutheran chorale can be found here. See also Robin Leaver, 'The Chorale: Transcending Time and Culture' in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* Vol. 56 Nos. 2-3 (April-July 1992), pp. 123-144.

³²⁰ Peter Williams argues that this was simply because it was sung frequently, rather than an earlier suggestion that the reason was to do with its having two-bar phrases. See Williams, *The Organ Music of J.S. Bach*, revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 370.



Fig. 56 (c). *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, from early 17th century hymnal.

The overall structure of *Bachsche Nachdichtungen* is as follows:

A. *Moderato, un poco essitando*. Introduction

B. *Allegretto con spirito*. Choral-Vorspiel 1. On Bach BWV 717. Two sections. Second in B-flat.

C. *Andante – Poco più*. Choral-Vorspiel 2. On Bach BWV 716. A major, combined with chorale melody *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* (Fig. 57). Shifting to *Poco affrettando – presto, mormorando – Sostenuto, dolce sempre*. Free fantasy, obliquely derived from Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel*, leading to *In Canone all'Ottava*, based on inversion of the *motivo fondamentale*.

D. *Sommessamente moderato*. Presentation of the *motivo fondamentale* in the manner of the Fuga 1 from Sorabji's *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, as in *Le démon*.

E. *Allegretto – un poco vivace, e più sotto voce – a tempo (più sostenuto)*. Using model from Bach BWV 769 and also Busoni *Sonatina in diem nativitatis Christi* 1917 (Fig. 58). *Alio modo in Canone alla Quinta*, upon *motivo fondamentale*. Alluding to Busoni *Etüde* Op. 18 No.4, then again to Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel* at the end. Short *Calmo* transition to:

F. *Allegro appassionato, energico – declamato* G. *Allegretto con spirito*. Short recapitulation of Choral-Vorspiel 1.

H. Combination of Choral-Vorspiel 3, on Bach BWV 662 (Fig. 59), with *In Canone all'Ottava per augmentationem*. The former is in D-flat major.

I. Inserted passage, combining various Sicilian folk melodies (to be used more extensively in *Sizilianische Männerakte*) with the 'Choeur Infernal' from Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers* (Fig. 60) and Bach's organ chorale *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, BWV 725.

J. Continuation of Choral-Vorspiel 3, with *L'altra sorte del Canone al rovescio, alla Terza*, derived from material from the beginning of *My parents' generation*.

K. *Allegro*. Free fantasia on the *motivo fondamentale*, based on second section of Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel* and Bach BWV 711.

L. *In Canone al rovescio (i) alla Seconda; (ii) alla Nona*. Leading to short allusions back to first section of Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel*, to Beethoven Fifth Symphony, then to Busoni *Etüde* Op. 18 No. 3. Transition to:

M. Choral-Vorspiel 4, on Bach BWV 677, A major, in the bass. combined with an abandoned organ piece derived from (and named after) the seventeenth-century Lutheran Chorale *Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit* (not used by Bach).



Fig. 57 (a). Bach, *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* BWV 385.



Fig. 57 (b). Melody derived from *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*.

VAR. II. a 2 Clav. e Ped.
 Alio modo in Canone alla Quinta

Fig. 58 (a). Bach, *Canonic Variations on Von Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her* BWV 769, Variation 2.



Fig. 58 (b). Busoni, *Sonatina in diem nativitatīs Christi* 1917, two passages from opening section.



Fig. 59. Bach, *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'* BWV 662.



Fig. 60. Offenbach, 'Choeur infernal' from *Orphée aux Enfers*. (tenor part of refrain).

Structurally, the work is somewhat less block-like than the Busoni *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*; the latter has a clear episodic structure consisting of an introductory choral prelude, three fugues, an intermezzo, three variations and a cadenza, then the fourth fugue, chorale and stretta. Finnissy integrates the chorale preludes and the canons in various ways into the overall structure. Nonetheless, the intense characterisation of the choral preludes causes them to act as centres of gravity or nodal points, in a similar manner to the Massé and David sections in *Unsere Afrikareise*. The choice of types of canons is also a direct allusion to Bach's monumental set of Canon Variations for organ on the Lutheran hymn *Von Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her* (BWV 769), a work about which, together with *Das Musikalische Opfer* and *Die Kunst der Fuge*, Malcolm Boyd writes that 'canon at its most intricate achieves a new autonomy, serving not as an esoteric greeting or a dry scholastic exercise, but in the creation of some of the most visionary and profound music ever composed'.³²¹

Finnissy carefully preserves salient features of some of the Bach material upon which he draws, such as a three-note ascending or descending scalar figure, or the fall of a major or minor sixth followed by a semitone upwards from BWV 717, which most extensively permeates Section B, whilst carefully avoiding certain cadential harmonies which occur in the original, and introducing greater degrees of chromaticism, angular

³²¹ Malcolm Boyd, *Bach* (London: Dent, 1983), p. 194. This work has been much praised from Bach's last years until the present day. In 1754, Johann Michael Schmidt wrote that 'If he [a composer] wishes to become great and famous, he must possess, in addition to knowledge of rules already discussed, all the powers of understanding in considerable degree; he must be able to think deeply and in intricate combinations. To be convinced of this, just look at the chorale, published in copper engraving by Bach, who has now been received into the choir of angels: *Von Himmel hoch da komm ich her*. I cannot persuade myself that the most difficult demonstration in geometry requires much deeper and more extensive reflection than this labor must have demanded.' (Schmidt, 'On the depth of Bach's compositional art', quoted in Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel (eds), *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, revised and enlarged by Christoph Wolff (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 361. The work probably dates from 1747-8 – see Yoshitake Kobayashi, 'Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastians Bachs. Kompositions- und Aufführungstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750', in *Bach-Jahrbuch* 74 (1988) (Leipzig: Neue Bachgesellschaft, 1988), cited in John Butt (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 281, n. 86. Finnissy, on a symbolical level, the allusion to this Bach work incorporated the knowledge that this was orchestrated by Stravinsky, thus tying in with another form of 'neo-classicism', and the circumstances of the work's production. Specifically, it was Bach's submission to the elite *Correspondirende Soceität der Musicalischen Wissenschaft*, founded by his student Lorenz Mizler, which he joined in June 1747 (Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 422-424).

contours and harmonic instability. 'Busoni moments' are found through, for example, fantastical chromatic arpeggios sweeping quietly upwards through the keyboard in a context of near stasis - as Busoni does in the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* - short allusions to some of Busoni's *Etüden* and *Sonatinen* and even a direct reference to a short section from Busoni's elaboration of the first section of Bach's Contrapunctus XIV in the same work. Most unusual are perhaps Sections H and J (I is an interruption within otherwise continuous material), a hectic passage combining a canon at the octave, with the durations of the lower part augmented by a factor of two (*In Canone all'Ottava per augmentationem*, as in Bach BWV 769), together with a selection from the upper parts of the third Bach organ choral prelude, *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'* BWV 662, one of the 'Leipzig' chorales. This work itself combines a walking bass line with a semiquaver-heavy alto and tenor parts, and an extremely ostentatious top line, though still fundamentally based upon the chorale melody. Finnissy transposes the Bach from A into D-flat, whilst the two outer parts are presented in A, and later works in material from the *Spirituals* and *My parents' generation*, to create a hallucinatory experience which is also something of a pianistic *tour de force*.

The last section employs a similar strategy to that in *Kapitalistisch Realisme* (and to some extent that in the earlier section on BWV 716), using an extended line in the bass derived directly from the Bach (the right hand part), in linear order, and whilst chromatically inflected in plenty of places, essentially preserving the overall tonality. However, here the original is significantly distorted in a rhythmic sense, both stretched and compressed so that no sense of a regular pulse lasts for more than a small gesture's worth. Above this is placed a free atonal right hand, which derives from an abandoned organ piece entitled *Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit*, taking its own title from a 1662 hymn with music by Johann Rudolph Ahle and text by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. The earlier work placed the hymn tune in the pedal bass as a *cantus firmus* and then Finnissy created two elaborate atonal lines above it. On a compositional level, Finnissy's way of using an existing work to generate a new one, simply with a change of *cantus*, could be seen as an equivalent of Bach's 'parody' compositions, adopting an old piece to serve a new text.

Bachsche Nachdichtungen is a strange section in many ways. There are various strands that lend it unity over and above the persistence of the *motivo fondamentale*. One of these is the recurrence of the Busoni *Choral-Vorspiel* version of the motif, whose very figuration appears at various junctures. The overall key scheme is too diffuse, and the individual sections too chromatic, for any more long-range harmonic structure to be perceived. The *Allegro* fantasia (Section K) grows out of the preceding chorale prelude, but it would be difficult to define why this section could not equally be described as a choral prelude (though it has little of the contrapuntal complexity of the other such sections). To me the whole section is full of fantastical and beguiling moments, but at times seems a little over-disjointed and occasionally rambling. But such moments are certainly the exception rather than the rule (and might perhaps be necessary to achieving the totality of the work as it exists). Sections H and J in combination serve as a nodal point for the whole of *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. Lending a retrospective sense of structural function to everything else which has led up to this point, from here the dramatic pacing shifts up several gears in all the passages leading from it up to the final choral prelude.

In a now infamous essay on Bach, Adorno asked 'If Bach was indeed modern, then why was he archaic?'³²² and, after exploring specific processes at work in various pieces, argued that:

Among his archaic traits is the attempt to parry the impoverishment and petrification of musical language, the shadow-side of its decisive progress. Such traits represent Bach's effort to resist the inexorable growth of the commodity-character of music, a process which was linked to its subjectivization. Yet such features are also identical with Bach's modernity inasmuch as they always serve to defend the right of inherent musical logic against the demands of taste. Bach as archaist distinguishes himself from all subsequent classicists, up to and including Stravinsky, by his refusal to confront the historical level of the material with an abstract stylistic ideal. Rather what becomes a means of forcing what is toward a future of its own making....Bach, as the most advanced master of *basso continuo*, at the same time renounced his obedience, as antiquated polyphonist, to the trend of the times, a trend he himself had shaped, in order to help it reach its innermost truth, the emancipation of the subject to objectivity in a coherent whole of which subjectivity itself was the origin. Down to the subtlest structural details it is always a question of the undiminished coincidence of the harmonic-functional and of the contrapuntal dimension. The distant past is entrusted with the utopia of the musical subject-object; anachronism becomes a harbinger of things to come.³²³

It would be both pointless, premature and perhaps ultimately meaningless to ask whether Finnissy's piece can match the actual work of Bach, or the exalted claims made in Adorno's extraordinarily perceptive exegesis of it. Nonetheless, these issues are extremely relevant to any discussion of Finnissy's own music vis-à-vis questions of modernity and archaism. Whilst Finnissy's *objets trouvés* (such as the Bach choral preludes used in *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*) do appear in a quasi-iconic role from time to time, Finnissy is canny enough to be aware of the need to approach Bach in terms of his own output as a continually developing and fluctuating quantity, both during and after his lifetime, rather than as a set of precious gems to be revered from a distance. Such an approach is both most Bachian and most modern simultaneously, provided one realises that modernity is itself a form of historical process rather than a stylistic commodity.

The sub-chapter *Sizilianische Männerakte* was inspired by a collection of photographs by the German photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden, some of whose work is shown in Fig. 61. Gloeden's work features young male nudes, from the Sicilian town of Taormina, where he made his home, captured in highly formalised and quasi-mystical homoerotic poses that evoke an idealised classical world.³²⁴ If von Gloeden's vision today seems utterly characteristic of romantic pre-industrial nostalgia, and has sinister overtones (to do with its ideals of bodily perfection, association of sexuality with pre-adulthood, and

³²² Adorno, 'Bach Defended Against his Devotees', in *Prisms*, translated Samuel and Shierry Webber (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1983), p. 139.

³²³ Ibid. p. 142. For an extremely interesting and essentially sympathetic exploration of this perspective, see Lawrence Dreyfus, 'Bach as Critic of Enlightenment', in *Bach and the Patterns of Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 219-244.

³²⁴ See Peter Weiermair, *Wilhelm von Gloeden* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 1994), pp. 7-8; Weiermair, 'Et in Arcadia Ego', in Tobias G. Natter and Peter Weiermair (eds), *Et in Arcadia Ego: Turn-Of-The-Century Photography* (Zurich: Edition Oehrl, 2000); and Giuseppe Vanzella, 'The Fires of Taormina', in Vincenzo Mirisola & Giuseppe Vanzella, *Sicilia Mitica Arcadia: Von Gloeden e la "Scuola" di Taormina* (Palermo: Edizioni Gente di Fotografia, 1981), and Roland Barthes, 'Wilhelm von Gloeden', in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, translated Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), pp. 195-197, for more on von Gloeden.

cultivation of arrogant and brutal primitivism), Finnissy is not the type of composer who would engage with such work undialectically.

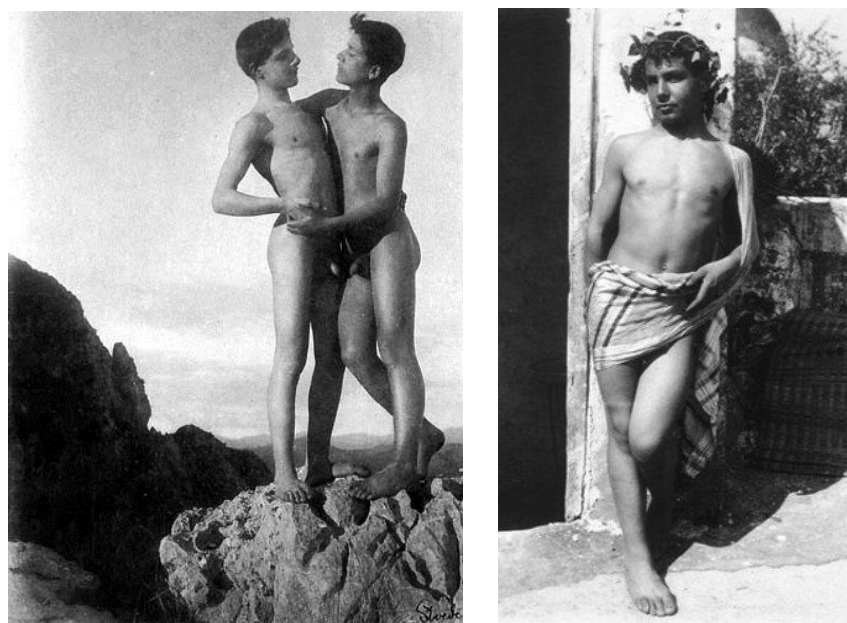


Fig. 61. Wilhelm von Gloeden, photographs.

For this long section, he employs two categories of material, specifically chordal category (e), in the form of selected lines extracted from a retrograde of the whole of Busoni's *Pezzo serio* from the Piano Concerto, as mentioned earlier; and also a combination of a vastly slowed-down melody derived from the *Sicilienne* aria 'O fortune, à ton caprice', from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* (Fig. 62),³²⁵ a collection of Sicilian folksongs collected by Meyerbeer (Fig. 63),³²⁶ some of the Sardinian *launeddas* music, and a type of imaginary Sicilian folksong (the second example in linear category (a), see Fig. 7), which is much more rhythmically regular than the rest of the material, and derived from reiteration of a small number of cells. This linear material clearly alternates between categories (a) and (c), but in totality presents a long expanse of keening melody without any real sense of development or change (indeed one long melodic passage is repeated almost verbatim). For the most part the 'Sicilian' material is in the right hand, the Busoni material in the left, with a few reversals earlier on (mostly when alluding to the actual Sicilian folksongs).

³²⁵ For a brief examination of this aria in the context of the opera, see Robert Ignatius Letellier, *Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable: The Premiere Opéra Romantique* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 77-78.

³²⁶ Meyerbeer, *Sizilianische Volkslieder*. Fritz Bose, in his introduction to this volume, draws attention to the fact that whilst 'O fortune' corresponds to the genre of the Siciliana in terms of rhythm and periodicity, the text and melody have no relation to any of the notated Sicilian songs and dances in this volume (p. 10).

O for - tune, à ton ca - pri - ce, viens je li - vre mon_ des - tin

à mes dé sirs sois pro - pi - ce et viens di - ri ger - man main!

Fig. 62 (a). Meyerbeer, Siciliano 'O fortune, à ton caprice' from *Robert le diable*.

6:5 4:3 Sostenuto 3

Siciliana (Robert le Diable): Meyerbeer

Molto tranquillo, ma un pò liberamente

vagamante 6:5 3

Fig. 62 (b). *Sizilianische Männerakte*, quotation from Meyerbeer *Robert le diable*.



Fig. 63. Some of the Sicilian folk melodies derived from the Meyerbeer collection.

The combination of the relatively narrow tessitura and lack of development in the Sicilian material would create a sense of timelessness, akin to von Gloeden's vision, were it not always tempered by the ongoing progression of the Busoni material. This latter material does not simply provide a dramatic underpinning for the melody, but is carefully designed by Finnissey so as to maintain a bitonal tension almost throughout (when the two hands seem to be arriving at some type of reconciliation, at a very advanced stage in the movement, Finnissey uses this as a cue for introducing the key gestural motif from Wagner). As mentioned before, the Busoni material is far from harmonically smooth (especially in its retrograded form), and when it is, at least in Finnissey's mediated representations, it is also frequently dark, brooding and chromatic, as well as somewhat insistent. There is not space here to describe in detail the intricacies of the combination; suffice to say that the result is of an illusory vision of some lost world which is forever tempered by a sense of urgency, drama, and motion. It would be simplistic to say that Finnissey is expressing some wholesale rejection of this Arcadian vision – on the contrary, the loving care with which he shapes and presents the melodic lines demonstrate his awareness of the power of such visions – rather he plays off an ideal of a lost world against a continual recognition of its impossibility. This is reminiscent of the concerns of *English Country-Tunes*, but with a much higher level of intricacy in terms of the detailed interactions between the materials.

Busoni completed the *Pezzo serioso* in a matter of days.³²⁷ It consists of four sections of differing lengths: *Introductio* – *Prima Pars* – *Altera Pars* – *Ultra Pars*. Guido Guerrini describes this movement as 'the only example of an almost Wagnerian Busoni, or more correctly, a Busoni derived from that Liszt which Wagner plagiarized'.³²⁸ However, Busoni's grandeur is not at all like that of Wagnerian heroism or Liszt's often banal attempts at the same; rather Busoni achieves a sense of unforced warmth tinged with melancholy and darkness that are closer to Mussorgsky (Liszt could certainly create these

³²⁷ Larry Sitsky, *Busoni and the Piano: The Works, the Writings and the Recordings* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 103. A discussion of the movement can be found in pp. 103-107.

³²⁸ Guido Guerrini, *Ferruccio Busoni: La Vita, La Figura, L'Opera* (Firenze, Montsalvato, 1944), p. 250, cited in Sitsky, *Busoni*, p. 104.

qualities as well, but not generally in a spirit of grandiosity, something he was for the most part unable to invest with substance). The dramatic themes have all the self-advertising iconic qualities of Wagnerian leitmotifs, to be sure, and their extension (rather than development) seems rather forced and even a little trite. But Busoni, in truly Lisztian fashion, structures the movement as much according to colour and texture as to thematic or harmonic development. Harmonies are relatively static, often simply consisting of undulations around a few chords for long stretches, whereas the use in particular of register within Busoni's imaginative figurations is extremely dynamic and varied.

Finnissy essentially structures the whole of *Sizilianische Männerakte* around a long line derived from running each of the four sections through the *Pezzo serioso* in reverse.

A. *Introductio.* *Adagio serioso – Sostenuto – Molto tranquillo, ma un pò liberamente – Andante sostenuto, pensoso.*

B. *Prima Pars.* *Andante, quasi Adagio*

C. *Altera Pars.* *Più con affetto, irrequieto – Ancora più tranquillo – Come da principio – Più lento e improvvisando – Un poco allargando – Andante maestosamente – Sommessamente – scorrevole il tempo.* Then appearance of Wagner motive.

D. *Ultima Pars.* *Andante idillico.*

This occurs for the most part (though not always) in the bass register, and is relatively faithful to the material it selects (without as many chromatic modifications as are to be found in the Beethoven, or certainly the Bach, sections). Thus are maintained long sections of relatively static, often idyllic calm and grandeur, together with a few dramatic passages. The emotional and psychological trajectory of the whole movement, is of course, significantly altered through the fact of each section running in reverse. In particular, the third and largest section, the *Altera Pars*, grows to a peak over a long period of time then falls, rather than peaking early then darkening over an extended period as in the Busoni. Furthermore, during this section a long section of the Sicilian material is repeated almost verbatim (sections transposed), though combined with different left hand material, and during one section overlaid by a series of unmetered grace notes together with other material (derived from both the 'Compression' passage of the *Poets* and also a passage just four pages earlier in this chapter), a technique Finnissy had previously used in *Folklore*.³²⁹ Whilst the Busoni runs throughout, section A is dominated by the Meyerbeer *Siciliano*, section B by the various Sicilian folk tunes, section C by the Pasolini material and section D by the *Siciliano* again. In Section C, at the *Come da principio*, Finnissy also introduces the imaginary Sicilian theme (Fig. 64), centered upon only three melodic notes, and derived from iterations of a set of seven melodic cells.

³²⁹ This device was itself inspired by a similar device in Cornelius Cardew's *Two Books of Study for Pianists* (1958). See Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 117-119.



Fig. 64 (a). Pitch cells for imaginary Sicilian melody.



Fig. 64 (b). Imaginary Sicilian melody.

Perhaps the most significant moment of all, or the ultimate goal of the section, is the appearance of the ‘Der ewigen Macht’ theme from *Götterdämmerung*, at the end of section C. In the passage leading up to this, Finnissy carefully configures a theme from the Busoni to lead to a deeply imperfect cadence into C major, then a sudden shift to the flattened supertonic, D-flat, overlaid with a high B-flat/G-flat minor sixth, which does not imply any clear resolution, towards a moment of great stillness. The Wagner theme itself creates a dominant seventh on A-flat with the high G-flat; Finnissy characteristically eschews cadential resolution, though, to a shift to a low D natural, a tritone away from A-flat, then the addition of a lower E. It is this harmonisation of the reiterated B-flat/G-flat minor sixth, with no real implied resolution at all (as constructed entirely from whole tones), combined with the lowering of the dynamics to near-inaudibility, that produces a sensation of extreme darkness intruding upon the sunny textures of earlier, rather than the Wagner motive itself. Finnissy finally moves away from this by using the second Wagner phrase to establish C-flat, which then serves as a subdominant harmony towards a resolution into G-flat.

At around twice the duration of any other piece in the cycle, it is almost a banality to say that the full *Kapitalistisch Realisme* has an epic quality. In a sense it is really three individual pieces with connecting sections, played continuously (as *Muybridge-Munch* was really two individual pieces). Thematic or motivic overlap between the three main sections does not occur on any deep level; at least the relationship between the sections is not really any stronger than that any of them have with other parts of the cycle, in this respect. But there are other unifying factors between *Kapitalistisch Realisme* and *Sizilianische Männerakte* in particular, most obviously the continuous presence of clearly tonally-derived material for long stretches in either, mostly in the bass register. There is of course a link between this sort of writing and the use of Mozart minuets and Schubert ecossaises in *Unsere Afrikareise*, or even the Schoenberg minuet in *Le réveil*, but here

such a technique is vastly more extended. In this sense at least the outer two sections of the work connect to one another very strongly. The work can be seen as a type of inner three-movement 'symphony' within the whole cycle, on a Brucknerian or Mahlerian scale.

What to make of it on a symbolical or conceptual level? The character of the three main sections are extremely distinct: heroic intransigence in the first, abstracted constructivism with touches of the macabre in the second and epic warmth and lyricism leading to darkness and tragedy in the third. As the titles of the second and third are incorporated within the first, what do *they* have to do with 'capitalist realism'? That is a question to which I have no answer, and wonder if it could be answered in a meaningful sense at all. But the fact that the piece has such an overall title surely has some sort of effect upon how it is perceived. Could Finnissy be attempting to say something about how *all* of the affective categories presented in the music have come to assume the status of a commodity in this day and age?

Chapter 9: *Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur*

After the symphonic dimensions and grandiosity of conception of *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Wachtend op de volgende uitbarsting van repressie en censuur* (whose Flemish title – reflecting the fact that Finnissy was teaching at the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* when writing it – translates as 'Before the next wave of repression and censorship') is a much more withdrawn, delicate and introverted piece. It can be loosely conceived as being in two long sections with an introduction: the second section consists of a 'cut-up' of modified fragments from the first, usually presented in retrograde-inverted form, and with a greater frequency of translation into abstract pointillistic form – a type of musical 'censorship'. Two fundamental sources inform the movement, from Busoni and Beethoven.

Busoni's *Symphonisches Intermezzo (Sarabande)* (1918) (Fig. 65) comes from his opera *Doktor Faustus*, but also exists as a separate work, usually coupled with the *Cortège* from the same opera. In a letter to Volkmar Andreae on the 1st January 1919, Busoni (who had earlier talked about the habit of 'rounding off the year with a small composition so as to put my signature to it as it were')³³⁰ described the two works as 'both entirely *unbrilliant* and contemplative', saying that they 'represent my most individual style'.³³¹ Anthony Beaumont points out how the work was composed with the closing scene, during which Faust effects the migration of his soul into another body, in mind, and that the use of the sarabande genre related to its association with hell in Cervantes's 'The Caves of Salamanca'.³³²

The first, second and fourth movements of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18 No. 5 were alluded to in *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, as we saw in Chapter 14. The third movement (Fig. 66) underlies the first section of *Wachtend* both as a source of material (this chapter features passages in ascending or descending sixths, linking with the fundamental intervals of the cycle) and to provide the variation structure for the first main section.

³³⁰ Cited in Beaumont, *Busoni*, p. 259.

³³¹ Busoni, *Selected Letters*, p. 280.

³³² See Beaumont, *Busoni*, p. 259.

[illegible]

Andante cantabile ♩ = 100

10

VAR. I

15

p

sempre stacc.

Fig. 66. Beethoven String Quartet Op. 18 No. 5, Third Movement, theme.

The structure is then as follows:

Introduction: Presentation of abstracted Sarabande, then three very brief episodes alluding to Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette*, Alkan material, Wagner 'Der Ewige Macht'.

A: In three sub-sections:

A (i): Emerging sarabande, with allusions to themes from *Muybridge-Munch*,

A (ii): Fragmentation and transition using Paganini material, and 'looping' Bach-derived material from *My parents' generation*.

A (iii): Three 'variations' (relating to Beethoven variations) followed by near-tonal 'Theme'.

B: Cut up of retrograde inversions of material from Section A

The introduction references the very opening of the 'Scène d'amour' from Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* (Fig. 67), which was used in Finnissy's first mature 'transcription', *Romeo and Juliet are Drowning*,³³³ and as such has a somewhat iconic meaning for the composer.



Fig. 67. Berlioz, 'Scène d'amour' from *Roméo et Juliette*.

This is itself re-configured in the manner of Busoni's Sarabande, with an accompaniment drawn directly from the Busoni work. In the A section, the Busoni provides the fundamental thread around which other material is woven and combined. Finnissy's variations allude obliquely to those in the Beethoven quartet, culminating in a more direct quotation of the theme, first in a retrograde-inverted form, then with the theme quoted outright (with a few distortions, but recognisable for what it is). But this very quotation itself is a sign of closure for this section, thus signalling the beginning of the B section, an array of disembodied fragments of what has come before, many of them in pointillistic form, and with several violent interjections, ultimately concluding with material from the beginning of *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. The possibilities of more fluent and uninhibited expression have become censored, repressed.

³³³ See Pace, 'The Piano Music', pp. 75-76, for more discussion of this work.

Chapter 10: *Unsere Afrikareise*

Unsere Afrikareise ('Our African Journey') takes its title from the 1966 film of the same name by the Austrian director Peter Kubelka. Kubelka's film manipulates images of the safari, used as a metaphor for colonial exploitation, described in Finnissy's words as:

[A]ppropriation (the 'benign' conversion and 'civilisation' of 'barbaric' traditions and religions, the outright theft and exploitation of mineral wealth) and exploration of a preconstructed otherness (the freshness and magic innocence of a Garden of Eden, a holistic spirituality now lost to European materialism and pseudo-scientific 'wisdom').³³⁴

Enacting a compositional strategy which parallels that of Kubelka, Finnissy draws primarily upon musical materials from different parts of Africa, which in his view represent 'trophies' which are displayed ('a jumble of tourist-snapshots')³³⁵ as well as being partially subsumed within the 'civilizing' influence of European traditions.

Kubelka, a film-maker whose abstract structural cinematic strategies owed something to his interest in contemporary music,³³⁶ constructs a film out of starkly juxtaposed shots that are never more than four seconds long (giving it something of the structure of a tourist film, though the content is as different as could be imagined). The cuts are in no sense smoothed over (either visually or aurally – the latter mirroring the former),³³⁷ continually alternating between bloated-looking, contemptuous Austrian tourists (together with African servants or helpers – in one memorable shot an Austrian rests their gun on the shoulder of an African) taking in pleasure in shooting wild animals, and the natives, filmed so as to look utterly helpless and innocent. The Europeans are captured savagely, as is Kubelka's prerogative as a European himself; however, his portrayal of the African natives accords somewhat too readily with primitivist stereotypes, casting Africans as eternal victims with little power of free will of their own.

Finnissy's *Unsere Afrikareise* acts as a direct counterpart to *North American Spirituals*, with a good deal of cross-referencing of material between the two pieces. In the *Spirituals* Finnissy was concerned to demonstrate in a quite perverse manner the nature of musical 'assimilation' through the device of incorporating African-American spirituals within hymn tunes of William Billings, in *Unsere Afrikareise* he not only does something similar (see below) within a 'European' context, but also mediates between forms of *representation* of African music in the context of several centuries of European music. In this sense the 'European' world of *Unsere Afrikareise* differs significantly from the 'American' one of the *Spirituals*.

³³⁴ Finnissy, programme note for *Unsere Afrikareise*, 1988.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ As well as an interest in early music and period instruments, which Kubelka mentions in an interview with *Hors Champ* – see http://www.offscreen.com/biblio/essays/interview_kubelka/ (accessed 13/7/06).

³³⁷ Kubelka speaks about his approach to sound in the interview with *Hors Champ*, saying 'In the visual, I have a shooting. Now I can use this visual to speak with sound. I thus put one of the voices of the man who is writing his journal. It says: "So!" meaning "Then!" in German. The voice of the accountant goes on: "We did that and that, etc." I used this sound as the exact portrait of the speaker. I combined or juxtaposed, or synchronized, the deadly shooting of the rifle with this "So!" of a typical "petit-bourgeois" indifference making him write: "Dear Journal, we are now in Africa and bla, bla, bla..."

The work interacts on many levels with wider issues and debates about musical orientalism and exoticism, which have been explored in some detail by musicologists in recent decades.³³⁸ Much of the work in question has concentrated upon questions of *representation*, and all the ideologies of imperialism, domination, gender, etc., entailed therein, rather than whether depictions of non-European worlds (or, occasionally, 'exotic' worlds existing within the West, such as those on the fringes of Europe, the culture of the Romani, and so on) can be considered to have any relationship to any external reality. Few of the writers concerned can or would claim any degree of expertise on the actual musical cultures depicted, and as such are not really in a position to judge any questions of verisimilitude³³⁹.

Naturally, such work is above all informed by the writings of the late Arab-American Edward Said,³⁴⁰ known primarily for his important activities as an activist in support of the Palestinian cause, and as writer of the book *Orientalism*.³⁴¹ Declaring that 'the Orient is not an inert fact of nature' (though qualifying this by saying 'it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was *essentially* an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality',³⁴² thus distancing himself somewhat from later post-modern interpretations), Said asserts that:

Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic

³³⁸ Amongst the most prominent writings on the subject are also Dahlhaus, 'Exoticism, Folklorism, Archaism', Schatt, *Exotik in der Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts*; Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music*; Scott, 'Orientalism and Musical Style'; Ralph P. Locke, 'Exoticism and Orientalism in Music: Problems for the Worldly Critic', in Paul A. Bové (ed), *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 257-81, 306-12; Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Matthew Head, 'Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory', in *Music Analysis* 22 (1-2) (2003), pp. 211-230; and Locke, *Musical Exoticism*. The study of musical 'exoticism' has particularly focused upon opera, as in Ralph P. Locke, 'Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*', in *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 3 No. 3 (November 1991), pp. 261-302, Thomas Bauman, W.A. *Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Susan McClary, *George Bizet: Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³³⁹ For example, Mary Hunter writes that the *alla turca* style 'represents only one of several possible versions of Turkishness, and I take for granted that the version chosen has more to do with European interests than with anything intrinsic to the Turks or Turkish music' (Hunter, 'The *Alla Turca* style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio', in Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music*, pp. 43-44). This is an easy way for a writer such as Hunter to absolve herself of any need to engage in a serious study of *actual* Turkish music of the time (which would likely require a study of and absorption of Turkish-language sources amongst other things) and the precise nature of its relationship to Mozart's allusions to it. For a critique of even more cavalier assumptions in the work of Matthew Head, see Benjamin Perl, review of Head, in *Music and Letters*, Vol. 83 No. 3 (2002), pp. 455-458.

³⁴⁰ Said was born in Jerusalem, but moved with his family to America in his teenage years, and remained resident there for the rest of his life. There have been controversies over the precise details of Said's early life which are beyond the scope of this note to investigate.

³⁴¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, fourth edition, with new preface and afterword (London: Penguin, 2003).

³⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 4-5

and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character. Additionally, the imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections.³⁴³

Said does not himself offer any detailed portrayal, based on 'empirical reality', of the actual Eastern world that was being represented,³⁴⁴ such as would make more palpable his claims that such representations are based primarily upon 'a sovereign Western consciousness' rather than perceptions based on experience (for such a portrayal would provide something against which to measure those representations). His claims, throughout the book, tend instead to be based as much upon rhetorical assertion as upon scholarly investigation and comparison. From what has been claimed to be a highly selective reading of a very partial selection of those historical writers in question,³⁴⁵ Said draws some very broad conclusions about the nature of and motivations for such representations, asserting that 'every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric';³⁴⁶ making such blanket assertions about a whole continent is rather ironic in the context of a book precisely claiming to critique representations of other peoples.³⁴⁷ But well-established

³⁴³ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

³⁴⁴ Said himself says that 'I have no interest in, much less capacity for, showing what the true Orient or Islam really are. Actually I go a great deal further when, very early in the book, I say that words such as "Orient" and "Occident" correspond to no stable reality that exists as a natural fact. Moreover, all such geographical designations are an odd combination of the empirical and imaginative. In the case of the Orient as a notion in currency in Britain, France and America, the idea derives to a great extent from the impulse not simply to describe, but also to dominate and somehow defend against it.' (Afterword to *Orientalism*, p. 331). Said's sentiments here would be more convincing if he himself did not indulge in such sweepingly generalised constructions of the West. Furthermore, the geographical area defined as the 'Orient' does not have to be a 'stable reality that exists as a natural fact' for one to be able to identify particular attributes of the society and culture within particular subsections therein, and compare these against their representations by those from without.

³⁴⁵ See Malcolm Kerr, review of *Orientalism*, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 12 (December 1980), pp. 544-547. Similar objections, albeit more mildly, are voiced by historian of the Arab world Albert Hourani in his review 'The Road to Morocco', *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 26 (March 8th, 1979), pp. 27-30.

³⁴⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 203-204.

³⁴⁷ Peter T. Daniels draws attention to how Said ends up embracing some of the most discredited aspects of eighteenth-century racial theories in order to prove his points. He also questions whether Said really had any 'discernable qualifications to speak on the topic'. See Daniels, 'The Decipherment of the Near East' in Daniel C. Snell (ed), *A Companion to the Ancient Near East (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World)* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 427. Similar criticisms are made by veteran French scholar Maxime Rodinson in Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher (ed), *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with leading Middle East Historians* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1994), p. 124. A more balanced approach to the whole subject than that of Said can be found in Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*, translated Roger Veinus (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 1988). Rodinson is highly critical of European attitudes to the Islamic world through history, which he charts in great detail along with their political and imperial manifestations (he is also particularly illuminating on the relationship between Marxism and Islam, the subject of his earlier book *Marxism and the Muslim World*, translated Jean Matthews (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1981)), but recognises nuances and the continuing value of Western rational and scientific methods. He argues that 'The growth of Orientalism was linked to the colonial expansion of Europe in a much more subtle and intricate way than he [Said] imagines' (*Europe and the Mystique of Islam*, p. 131). The Indian Marxist critic Aijaz Ahmad points out devastatingly how Said's narrative finds its most passionate adherents amongst members of a university intelligentsia who originate in the ethnic

criticisms of Said are rarely engaged by musicologists looking at the subject of exoticism, and his writings are often taken by some such figures as axiomatically true, and have thus attained the status of ideology.³⁴⁸

A lot of Finnissy's music might be found wanting by these terms, for he has engaged with, alluded to, and even represented a very wide range of 'exotic' music and peoples in his work from the early 1980s onwards. These include the music and peoples of Aboriginal Australia, Sardinia (an 'exotic' location on the very fringes of Europe), Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, the Venda Africans of the Transvaal, India, Korea, to name just a few places.³⁴⁹ In most cases Finnissy foregrounds the most obviously 'exotic' extra-European musical attributes of this work: elaborate ornamentation, unusual rhythms, wide tessitura, the use of microtones, sensuous harmonies (though not generally static harmonies, nor repetitive rhythms) and in general that which seems to connote the primal and the sexual. However, to judge the value in symbolic terms of, for example, Finnissy's allusions to Moroccan and Berber music in *Unsere Afrikareise* would, by the standards I suggested above, require an intimate knowledge of the music in question, from which vantage point to gauge the nature and veracity of the representation and thus what the piece is 'saying' about the music and peoples in question. I am not a specialist ethnomusicologist or anthropologist of that region (nor is Finnissy) and so would not feel qualified to undertake such a thing (it might of course be interesting to read what such a specialist would have to say on the subject).

It is not easy in particular to disentangle, say, the Vendan African-inspired *ngano* for choir, flute and percussion (1984) from a good deal of primitivist cultural stereotypes about sub-Saharan African people, and maybe one can interpret *Unsere Afrikareise* as an attempt to respond musically to the issues thus thrown up. To this end, Finnissy employs varying strategies for representation of sources and implied distance from them, and draws upon a whole vocabulary of orientalist representation from nineteenth-century composers (mostly French). These are placed in dialogue with other material derived from collections from the areas in question. Specifically, he uses the following categories of material:

1. Folk music from Africa. This includes Vendan African songs (taken from the ethnomusicological work of John Blacking,³⁵⁰ which was earlier sourced in *ngano*),

minorities and come from the upper classes in their home countries, by providing a narrative which conveniently bypasses class. See Aijaz Ahmad, "Orientalism and After: Ambivalence and Metropolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said", in Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 195-196. My thanks to Peter T. Daniels for some interesting information and discussion on critics of Said. There are many other critics of Said (including a variety from the Arab World); important recent texts, including summaries of earlier critiques, include A.L. Macfie, *Orientalism* (Edinburgh and London: Pearson Education, 2002), pp. 102-47; and Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), pp. 277-309.

³⁴⁸ See for example Hunter, 'The Alla Turca style', p. 317 n. 6; McClary, *Bizet: Carmen*, p. 29; or Philip Brett, 'Britten's Dream', in Ruth Solie (ed), *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 278. However, the work of Bellmann, Locke and to some extent Scott is considerably more nuanced, subtle and critical than that of Hunter, McClary, Brett and Head.

³⁴⁹ Aboriginal music features in a cycle of works from 1982-83 (*Teangi, Warara, Aijal, Banumbirr, Marrngu, Ulpirra, Hikkai and Ouraa*), Sardinian in *Duru-Duru*, Finnissy's first major 'folk music' work, Azerbaijan in *Keroiylu, Terekkeme, Uzundara and Sepevi*, Kurdistan in *Yalli, Nasiye, Dilok, Cirit, Delal* and *Kulamen Dilan*, Vendan Africa in *ngano*, music of India and Korea in *Folklore 4*.

³⁵⁰ Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs*.

Ethiopian chant, as well as Moroccan and Berber folk music.³⁵¹ These are simply called 'Folksongs' in the sketches.

2. 'Assimilated' African folk music. This is music from category 1, but combined with other European material, specifically Mozart Minuets and Schubert Ecossaises, designed so as to demonstrate the incongruity of the combinations as in the *Spirituals*. This generally takes the form of the folk music as a right-hand melody together with a bass line from Mozart or Schubert.

3. European representations of Africa and African music. Here Finnissy draws upon mediated allusions to music of Rameau, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Debussy, Alan Bush, and more prominently, passages from Victor Massé's opera *Paul et Virginie* and Félicien David's 'symphonic ode' *Le Désert*. In the sketches, these are divided up into one group called 'European response' – twelve moderately extended fragments which seem to all be derived from Bush, a corresponding set of 'Accompaniments' (very freely derived from the same source and some others, including the Rameau), not all of which were used, and another category called 'Quotations', including the Rameau, Debussy, Coleridge-Taylor, Denny and Gounod.

4. African-American music and its representations. This takes the form mostly of the heavily mediated passages from the *Spirituals* (usually further mediated simply through techniques of retrograde and the like) as well as additional material from Homer Denny's collections of ragtime.

5. 'Pointillistic discourse'. This type of material encountered earlier in *Le réveil* and *MPG*. Deriving from the other material in the piece, the passage of this type in *UA* is the most extended of its type in the whole cycle. In its nature and configuration, it was intended to suggest the Piano Sonata of Jean Barraqué³⁵² or the passages of unstemmed pitches in Iannis Xenakis's piano piece *Mists*.

Fig. 68 shows the basic gamut of 'folksong' material used in the piece. The first three lines derive from Moroccan/Berber sources, the next four from Ethiopian sources, the last four from Vendan sources. Whilst this is not the place to embark upon an extended discussion of Moroccan, Berber, Ethiopian or Venda music,³⁵³ some basic attributes as filtered through into Finnissy's material are relatively clear: pentatonic or other limited groups of pitches for the Venda melodies and the first Moroccan/Berber melodies, more florid, extensively ornamented for the Ethiopian. However, the origins of much of the material ceases to be of much consequence when it becomes transformed, as Finnissy uses configurations associated with one of the material types in order to transform another. Recurrent oscillating adjacent pitches (an extremely common figuration in much Arabic music) form a further link with 'By and by' and the ecstatic Chabrier music experienced briefly in *Muybridge-Munch* and *Wachtend*.

³⁵¹ The basic source here is Chottin (ed), *Corpus de Musique Marocaine*.

³⁵² An allusion that the composer himself suggested to me and which seems appropriate.

³⁵³ Powne and Blacking provide excellent introductions to Ethiopian and Vendan music respectively; on Arabic music in general, a concise but highly informative text in English is Habib Hassan Touma, *The Music of the Arabs* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996).

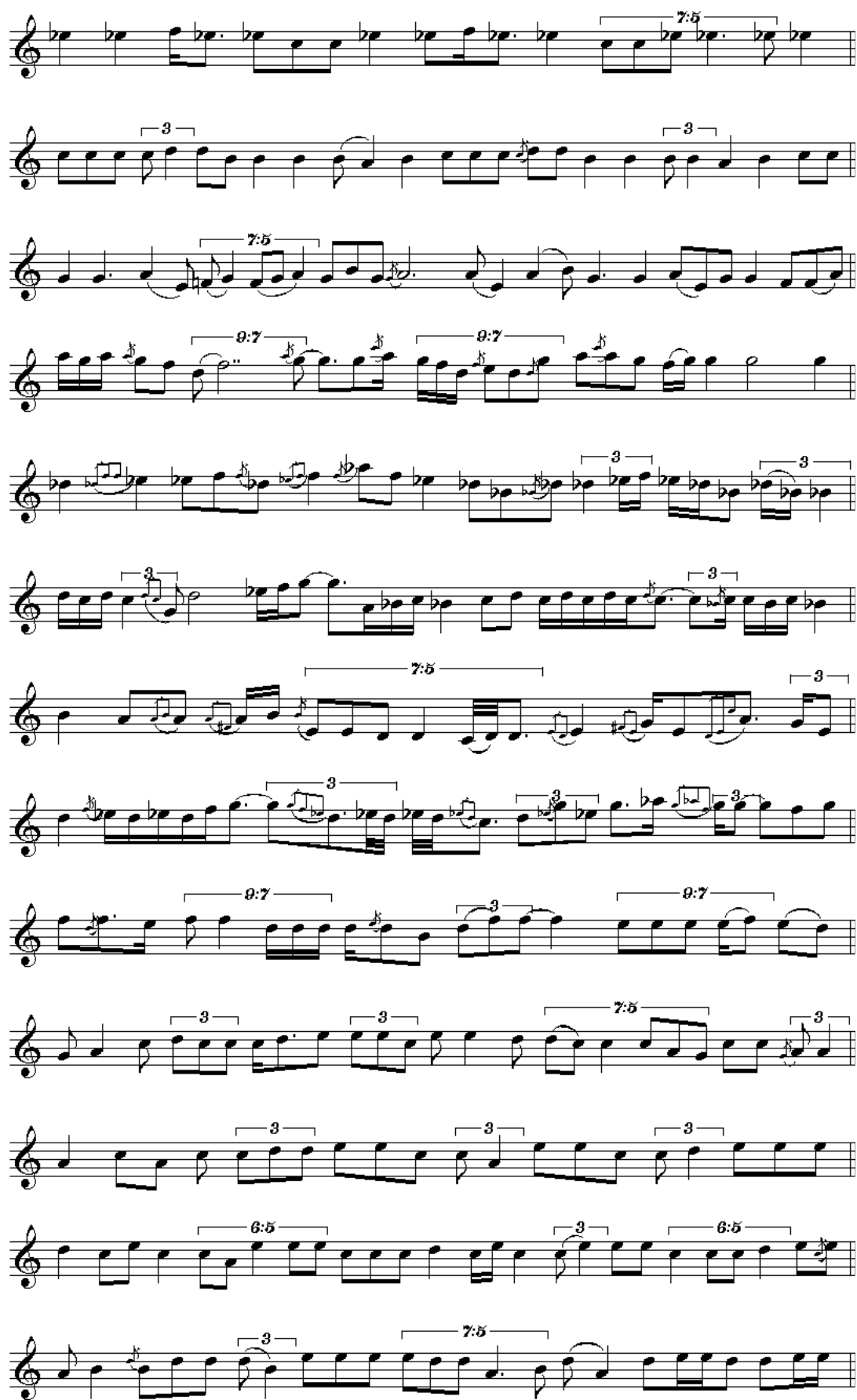


Fig. 68. Gamut of folksong material for *Unsere Afrikareise*.

Structurally, the work falls into clear sections demarcated by pronounced shifts in dynamics, texture, or tonality/atonality, as follows:

A. An extended passage all marked *pppppp*!. Alternating four combinations of African folk songs together with Mozart minuets as bass lines with *mélanges* of most types of material to be found in clearer form in section C.

B. Tonal Music 1. A relatively literal transcription of part of the Air ‘Ah! Pauvre nègre...’ from Act 1 of Victor Massé’s opera *Paul et Virginie*. The predominant modality at the outset is Aeolian on D. A freer short fantasy upon this material acts as a transition to the following section.

C. The central section of the work. An elaborate montage of material from categories 1-4, including some silences alluding to their equivalents in the *Spirituals*. Tempo continually shifting up and down a spectrum from crotchet 116 to crotchet 192. A short transition, *pp* then *pppppp*, first introduces material from David, which becomes clearer in D.

D. Tonal Music 2. More extended than B, this consists of three sections quoting clearly passages from Félicien David’s *Le Désert*. The first uses a Phrygian mode on F#, the second approximates to G major, the third B minor. An explosive fourth section loses a clear sense of a key centre.

E. Pointillistic discourse. In violent contrast to what has come before, an extremely extended discourse consisting mostly of unstemmed pitches or fragmentary gestures. In the final moment, passages from the *Spirituals* (including the ‘cluster’ material) are interspersed within this.

F. Coda. A melancholy and mysterious selection of materials, very slow, settling down to the spirituals after a short violent interruption. This section appears to be resolving into D-flat major at the end, but the final gesture contradicts this.

The opening section begins with the first of the four minuets³⁵⁴. The bass lines for each of these are taken from Mozart’s Eight Minuets for piano K315a (1773), specifically Nos. IV, V and the Trio of No. VIII (which may have been composed later than the rest, around 1779-80³⁵⁵), as well as the Minuet in D K94. In Minuet 1 he uses Mozart’s No. V, and combines it with the Vendan song ‘Potilo’ (Fig. 69): then the pitch and relative tonality of treble and bass were changed, as well as their rhythmic ratio, to create a greater sense of disjunction and tonal fluidity, avoiding too great an ‘assimilation’.

³⁵⁴ In the first version of this piece, Finnissy had a fifth Minuet of a quite different nature (marked ‘expressionless and dry’ in the score), which appeared in the transition between sections E and F. However, this was removed from the final version.

³⁵⁵ See Patrick Gale, ‘Piano: sonatas and other works’ in H.C. Robbins Landon (ed). *The Mozart Compendium: A Guide to Mozart’s Life and Music* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 307. Whether this trio really does belong with the other pieces is sometimes questioned. See Emily Anderson (ed), *The Letters of Mozart and his Family* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 682 n.4. Finnissy’s view of Mozart has always been ambivalent; when he has alluded to his music, it has tended to be earlier works, generally those less well-known, as for example in the trio *WAM*.



Fig. 69 (a). Mozart Minuet K315a No. V (Minuet only).



Fig. 69 (b). Vendan song 'Potilo'.³⁵⁶



Fig. 69 (c). Original draft of opening.

³⁵⁶ Taken from Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs*, p. 59.

Otherwise, the other initial types of allusions used in the first section (to material deriving from Rameau, Gounod,³⁵⁷ Alan Bush, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and ragtime from Debussy and Homer Denney) are distinguished by being presented in a form relatively close to that of the original (especially in terms of register, tessitura and density), though with random procedures employed for transposition. Finnissy juxtaposes these with a selection of material from category 1, distinguished by rhythmic unison between hands in the case of Vendan music (also shifting continuously between central and more extreme registers), and alternating chords on the offbeat for the Moroccan/Berber/Ethiopian music, in the typical *dum-tak* (representing the centre and the edge of a drum respectively) manner common to much North African music³⁵⁸ (as shown in Fig. 7 (d)). Crudely put, the Northern African material is presented as monody with rhythmic accompaniment, whilst the sub-Saharan African material is presented in a polyphonic style; in both cases representative of highly generalised characteristics of the music of the different regions. Other material types are quite clearly distinguished by their specific attributes – treble register for the Bush material, syncopated rhythms for the Debussy/Denny material, etc. – yet long-range lines indicated by dotted phrases often cross over the ‘cuts’ between material.

The two sections I call ‘Tonal Music’³⁵⁹ on one level mirror the popular songs which appear in *My parents’ generation*, though their structural function in the whole work differs somewhat. The first is a transcription of the aria ‘Ah! Pauvre nègre...’ from *Paul et Virginie* by the now largely forgotten, but once prominent French composer Victor Massé (1882-1884). This 2/4 aria consists mostly of a staccato quaver accompaniment in chords, above which the tenor part for ‘A Negro’ (an onlooker) sings about the awful plight of the black slave Meala, kicked, whipped and cuffed by the tyrannical plantation owner St. Croix. The repeated dotted rhythms in the orchestra might be interpreted as representing the crack of a whip in a manner akin to the ‘scourging’ music in the *St Matthew Passion* (Fig. 70). Finnissy transposes the aria down a perfect fifth into a Phrygian mode on D, but otherwise maintains its somewhat stereotypically non-Western qualities – static harmonies, ornamental figurations on the melody and (in line with many representations of black music) incessant rhythm. The melody is placed in the left hand, a quasi-melodic extrapolation of the orchestral music in the right (also with some rhythmic irregularities). The ‘whipping music’ contrasts measured rhythms with grace notes upon the same type of material, a variation upon the Massé original.

Section C features the type of frenetic montage to be found in Kubelka's film. The rate of change of material is rapid, whilst overlaid by a tempo structure (oscillating up and down between metronome marks of 116 and 192, but with gradual accelerandos and sudden rallentandos at the ends of sections) that seems to operate independently in some respects, in accordance with the particularities of the material in others. The peak tempos are always associated with the four Ecossaises, which parallel the Minuets in the A

³⁵⁷ From Gounod's opera *La Reine du Saba*.

³⁵⁸ For an extremely brief description of the basics of Arabic rhythm, see Otto Karolyi, *Traditional African and Oriental Music* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 64-66; for more detail, see Touma, *The Music of the Arabs*, pp. 46-54.

³⁵⁹ Both of these are taken almost verbatim from a slightly earlier Finnissy work, the cycle of miniatures for piano *Violet, Slingsby, Guy and Lionel* (1994-96, currently withdrawn, awaiting revision). The first of these was originally called ‘A subdued simultaneous snuffle’, the second ‘On the Brink of the Western Sky’ (each of the movement titles in the earlier work come from the story of the same name by Edward Lear).

section, here using bass lines derived from Schubert Ecossaises. The music is suffused with familiar tropes of musical orientalism, for example the use of a turn like figuration, often in thirds (a common trope that can also be found in the music of Meyerbeer and Massenet). Very crudely, one could say the music shifts rapidly between different types of musical ‘images’: non-European/modal (folk music), nineteenth-century European/tonal/bitonal (from the European representations of African music), modernist/chromatic (from the *Spirituals* material) and non-European/European clashing (the Ecossaises).

Un Négrillon (couché à l'ombre d'un cactus) (à pleine voix)

Ah! pauvre nègre il ta faut souf - fir!

A fouet du

Fig. 70. Victor Massé – Air: ‘Ah! pauvre nègre...’ from *Paul et Virginie* Act 1.

Massé- 'Chanson'
Paul et Virginie, Act 3, Scene 1

Saint-Saëns- 'La Brise'
from *Melodies Persanes*

Delibes - 'Chant de l'almée'

Bizet - 'Adieux de L'Hôtesse Arabe'

Unsere Afrikareise

The musical score for 'Unsere Afrikareise' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody in the treble staff features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a 3/4 time signature indicated. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment, with a 3/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 71. Orientalist trope – turn and thirds – as used in *Unsere Afrikareise*.

The second 'Tonal Material' is taken from Félicien David's 'symphonic ode' *Le Désert* (1844), a vital work relating to the ideas of French socialist group (at least usually described as such) who were followers of the ideas of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825). Saint-Simon and his small cult of followers analysed the forms of wage slavery that befall the proletariat working for their industrial chief in a way that clearly anticipates Marx's later and more systematic analysis of such a situation. His ideas

were tied in with a very particular brand of Christianity to the extent that he can be considered a highly significant figure within the history of 'Christian socialism'³⁶⁰ (he is also believed to have been the first figure to have applied the term 'avant-garde' to culture).³⁶¹ The Saint-Simonian movement was suppressed in 1832, at an early time during the July Monarchy, but many of the other disciples travelled to the Middle East, apparently in search of the 'Female Messiah' or 'woman-mother'³⁶² (the Saint-Simonians adhered to a strange mixture of matriarchal ideas and sexual mysticism). David, who had first become involved with the Saint-Simonians during his time as a student at the Paris Conservatoire, travelled with them to Turkey, Egypt and Palestine, and during his trip collected various music which he later transcribed for piano as a volume called *Mélodies orientales* (1836) upon his return to France.³⁶³ Eight years later he composed *Le Désert*, equivalent to a scenic cantata in three parts, portraying a scene in the Middle Eastern desert to a text by the poet August Colin.³⁶⁴ Each of the three movements is subdivided into several scenes, portraying life in the desert (the story is ultimately reasonably inconsequential; the atmosphere portrayed is of much greater importance to this music).³⁶⁵ The work was a huge success, attracting the advocacy not least of Berlioz, who cited it as part of a polemic against classical forms in a major review, and noted its enthusiastic responses from audiences.³⁶⁶ It was played all over Europe and America³⁶⁷ to packed houses, and became a major influence upon a wide range of later 'orientalist' works in the century, including those of Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Dèlibes, Massenet and Gounod, as well as possible Berlioz and Verdi, becoming recognised as, as Peter Gradenwitz puts it, 'the first authentically exotic musical work whose author had experienced the Orient at first hand'.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁰ See <http://sadenaco.ipower.com/Archive/New-Christianity/> (accessed 10/11/13) for Saint-Simon's important essay on this subject.

³⁶¹ In the volume *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* (Paris: Galérie de Bossange Père, 1825), pp. 210-211, cited in. Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 101. Calinescu argues that whilst attributed to Saint-Simon, this volume was actually a collaborative enterprise between Saint-Simon and some of his students and disciples (pp. 101-102).

³⁶² See 'Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13377a.htm> (accessed 21/12/2005)

³⁶³ See Locke, 'Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers', p. 113.

³⁶⁴ Locke discusses the creation of the work in some detail in *Music, Musicians and the Saint Simonians*, pp. 208-212. See also Dorothy Veinus Hagen, *Félicien David 1810-1876: A Composer and a Cause* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 67-90.

³⁶⁵ Though Locke believes that 'As for the central image of a desert caravan, the audience cannot have missed in it an allusion to the Saint-Simonian mission to Egypt.' (*Music, Musicians and the Saint Simonians*, p. 209).

³⁶⁶ See Hagen, *Félicien David*, pp. 81-85. Berlioz conducted *Le Désert*; David Cairns suggests that it and other pieces in such a vein were a huge success in light of 'the vogue for things Middle Eastern which had hit Paris with the arrival of six Algerian chiefs and their picturesque retinues on an official visit' (Cairns, *Berlioz: Volume 2, Servitude and Greatness 1832-1869* (London: Penguin, 1999)). Berlioz also conducted the work in a concert in honour of the governor of Syria (ibid. p. 353).

³⁶⁷ According to one short pamphlet on the work, it was performed fourteen times in New York in 1846, to audiences averaging 2000. See *The Desert, Ode Symphony, composed by Félicien David* (New York: J.L. Koethen, 1848), p. 8.

³⁶⁸ Peter Gradenwitz, 'Félicien David (1810-1876) and French Romantic Orientalism', in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. LXII No.4 (October 1976), pp. 502-503. Elsewhere in this article, Gradenwitz compares the 'Chant du muezzin' with a transcription of a comparable actual chant recorded in Jerusalem in 1968 (pp. 491-492). He also points out how Berlioz grew to tire of the work, calling it 'silly music' in 1857 (p. 494).

Finnissy sets David's 'Dance des almées' (Egyptian belly dancers),³⁶⁹ transposed up a whole tone then shifted down two octaves into the bass registers, whilst Finnissy's accompaniment is if anything at first more repetitive than that of David (see Fig. 72). He then goes on to set the tenor solo, 'Rêverie du soir' at the beginning of Part 2 of *Le Désert* (in that case in the key of E-flat), the relatively static harmonies (as with the previous section) in accordance with other 'non-European' evocations (especially alluding to the music of the Arab world), though also establishing this passage as an oasis of calm in the context of the whole work. The final section transcribes, in relatively literal form, the 'Chant du muezzin' from the beginning of Part 3 of *Le Désert*. The muezzin is a servant of the mosque who gives the summons to the five daily prayers and the Friday service from on a platform, and it is this that David portrays here.³⁷⁰ But where David harmonised the muezzin's calls in the orchestra, Finnissy leaves it mostly as a monophonic line which thus becomes reminiscent of his numerous other similar passages in his piano writing.



Fig. 72. Félicien David, 'Danse des almées' from *Le Désert*.

A moment of calm tends to anticipate a violent explosion in Finnissy's music, and the end of Section D is no exception. However, the violence of Section E, in terms of its musical nature, positioning within the piece and sheer length, exceeds this by some measure. As if in response to the extended passages of relative tonal stability encountered just previously, Finnissy seems to have felt the need to create a musical gesture that enacts

³⁶⁹ Richard Taruskin says that these were 'regarded by Europeans as prostitutes', and that this dance 'supplies what would prove to be the most durable, indeed indispensable, ingredient in European musical orientalism. See Taruskin, 'Self and Other', in *The Oxford History of Western Music* Vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 387-389. Locke ('Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers', p. 115) says this dance is 'quite pathbreaking in that it vividly evokes images of curvaceous women dancing with supple arm and torso movements; the beckoning quality is intensified by the curly melody's being given to a solo oboe, perhaps understood as the equivalent of the Arab *mujwiz*'. Both of course are highly subjective interpretations of this dance.

³⁷⁰ Taruskin (*Oxford History*, Volume 4, pp. 388-389) suggests that this apparently authentic music involves an attempt at invoking microtones through the close tessitura of one of the melismas. This was obvious not an option to Finnissy when writing for the piano, so he omits this. However, one can be reasonably sure that were he writing for another instrument, he would have included elaborate microtones of his own. According to Locke, the tenor in the first performance sung with microtones, coached by David, though he did not know how to notate them in the score. See Bellman (ed), *The Exotic in Western Music*, p. 329 n. 30.

the aural equivalent of slashing a canvas (as with some of the paintings of Francis Bacon upon which he committed such violent acts; the lines running across some of Barnett Newman's paintings might also be said metaphorically to fulfil a similar function). Within the course of the cycle's composition, *Unsere Afrikareise* was the first piece in which he did such a thing (as we know from earlier, similar if less extended passages occur in *Le réveil* and *My parents' generation*). As he did with the 'compression' material in earlier pieces, Finnissy derives his pointillistic material from that to be found earlier in the work. Specifically, he derives it from cutting up the first four-and-a-bit pages of the work into 100 short fragments, then using a random procedure to select these and combine them to form gestures.

After a long expanse of such material which almost obliterates memories of that which came previously, Finnissy heralds a transition back to more 'regular' piano writing with a sudden change of dynamics, but then leads into some left-over material from the 'Cowell' section of the *Spirituals*, bringing clusters into this piece for the first time. Then he incorporates a snippet of some completely new material, from the traditional Christian hymn 'Washed in the Blood of the Lamb' (Fig. 73), whose title is from Revelations 7:9-17 (King James version), and the words and music for which were written by Tullius C. O'Kane and published in 1872.

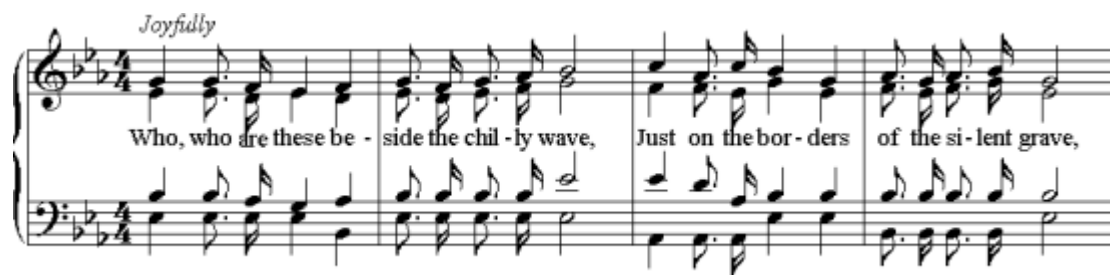


Fig. 73. Traditional Christian hymn, 'Washed in the Blood of the Lamb'

In an analysis of Kubelka's film, Catherine Russell describes aptly how:

The film was commissioned to be a mirror of sorts, by the Austrian hunters who Kubelka accompanied to Africa, but it becomes a fun-house mirror, horrifically distorting their image. The montage is accompanied by rifle shots on the soundtrack, extending the cause and effect of killing to other rhetorical transitions. The horror of the film is not only the merciless killing of wild game but the intercutting of this imagery with supplemental footage of Africans, many of them bare-breasted women. Match cuts equate, through substitution and metaphor, African bodies with the animal targets. Shots of the hunters looking through binoculars and telescopic rifle sights inscribe a voyeuristic *dispositif* within the film, and a voyeuristic gaze is equally implied in the footage itself, which is consistently marked by a depth of field and frames within frames.³⁷¹

Few works of instrumental music can work with materials as concrete as those in Kubelka's *Unsere Afrikareise*; here the resemblance with Finnissy's piece becomes less clear-cut. There is violence in Finnissy's *Unsere Afrikareise*, for sure, shockingly so on a structural level but also manifest in certain types of material (for example in the combination of Venda songs with Schubert bass lines), but not in a way that generates

³⁷¹ Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 128.

meaning as does the sequence of a dead animal next to a helpless African woman. Rather, Finnissy juxtaposes his musical ‘images’ (which inevitably would be heard more in terms of their musical properties rather than in a clear semiotic manner, so hazy can be the relationship with the originals, which themselves are surely relatively obscure to those Western audiences as are most likely to hear Finnissy’s piece) in ways that draw attention mostly to the strangeness of the combinations and joins.

Chapter 11: *Etched bright with sunlight*

In the last chapter of the *History*, Finnissy opts for a reasonably conventional type ‘finale’ to the work as whole, one which brings various musical strands together in a relatively logical, even inevitable manner. It is a more continuous and ‘driving’ piece than most of the others, with an inexorable sense of momentum that drives it from beginning to end. The title is taken from a closing line in an unfilmed screenplay by the late director Derek Jarman, entitled *Sod ‘Em*³⁷² – Jarman’s combination of apocalyptic vision and tender lyricism provides an obvious affinity for Finnissy. *Sod ‘Em* was written whilst Jarman was directing a film of Sylvano Bussotti’s opera *L’Ispirazione* at the Teatro Comunale in Firenze in 1988³⁷³ (two years after Jarman had been diagnosed as HIV-positive). It is an extremely angry and somewhat crudely didactic work that served as a prototype for his later film *Edward II* (1991). It portrays a ravaged England in the not-too-distant future, characterised by brutality, extreme homophobia and racism, and genocide at the hands of a Tory government together with the willing participation of the security services and armed forces. Gay people are quarantined on account of public hysteria about AIDS, books by gay authors are publicly burned, the Royal Family are relegated to appearing on a television sitcom, the welfare state has been completely dismantled; in general this England resembles Nazi Germany. Within this decimated landscape wander historical gay figures (or at least assumed to be so) such as Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Lord Byron and Oscar Wilde. A young actor Edward is the central protagonist, dreaming of being Edward II in Marlowe’s play, and dying for his love for Piers Gaveston (taken up in more detail in the later film). Contemporary dialogue is intermingled with allusions to Marlowe’s Elizabethan verse. It is a screenplay that communicates extreme bitterness, anger and impotence. In the final scene, Edward, having woken up in bed with his lover Johnny (with whom he finds his own oasis of tenderness in a deeply hostile world), utters the following biblically-tinged lines:

This morning, etched bright with sunlight, precise as the shadows cast by my life, I emptied my pockets of time, the eternal that neither endures or passes, lay in my hand, world without beginning or end, always and now.³⁷⁴

From the very outset of the piece Finnissy mirrors something of Jarman’s apocalypse. The first section begins with an explosive outburst in the upper registers reminiscent of some of Finnissy’s earlier virtuoso piano works. Despite a continuous sense of forward momentum, the structure of the work is quite detailed, in six large sections:

³⁷² Published in Derek Jarman, *Up In The Air: Collected Film Scripts* (London: Vintage, 1996), pp. 183-225.

³⁷³ Ibid. p. 183.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 225.

A: 1. Brilliant *ffff* explosion at top of keyboard, based on 'digest' of Bach material, freely transposed and rhythmically distorted.

2. Polyrhythmic quasi-ostinato in regular metrical units in either hands, hands swapping half-way. Based upon continuous variation of Bach-derived notes/chords and short allusions to other parts of the cycle. Gradually falling in dynamic.

3. More irregular rhythms in the hands, continuing same material. Appearance of Wagner 'Der Ewigen Macht' clearly in the left hand. Material using longer and longer note-values.

4. Sudden shift into bass region. Development of Wagner, with interruptions. First allusions to *Unsere Afrikareise*.

5. Long canons in chords in treble register, based on penultimate phrase of Bach chorale.

6. Ornate and mysterious passage, *pppppp!*, preparing the ground with first hints of Berlioz.

7. Appearance of distant vision of theme from Berlioz 'Scène d'amour' from *Roméo et Juliette*.

B. Marked in the sketches as 'L'orientalisme'. 1. Monophonic passage based on Moroccan/Berber music from *Unsere Afrikareise* and Kavafis material from *Poets*. Combined with drone then extra part.

2. Rowdy, overloaded four-part writing, three parts all from fragments of *Unsere Afrikareise*, bottom line based on Bach and *Te Deum*. Introduction of melodies from the *Spirituals* towards end.

C. Catalogue 1. Increasing diversity – material from *UA*, *My parents' generation* (Sullivan, 'Whatever you are') and *Poets*, as well as further allusion to the Berlioz. First anticipations of 'Compression' material.

D. Bach. Selections from various of the canons in *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*. Then combination of Bach with Billings in the manner of the *Spirituals*. This is ultimately transformed into:

E. Compression. Wild, like that near the end of the *Poets*, but shorter.

F. Catalogue 2. Rapid montage of fragments from all around the cycle, leading to final outburst then dissolve into nothingness.

Finnissy also derives some basic and rather 'blank' material (also featuring in *Le démon*, bringing the piece full circle) from the Bach *Te Deum*, as shown in Fig. 74 (a). Other fundamental themes from the work appear soon afterwards – a reference to the Wagner 'Der ewigen Macht' motive (here in its fullest form yet, incorporating parts of the orchestral accompaniment as well as Hagen's line), during a paring down of the type of material above towards a sense of nothingness, from which context the Berlioz motive can grow. In preparation for this, Finnissy creates a canon between the two hands, generated in a very straightforward manner taking the basic line from the penultimate phrase of the chorale as before, then using an inversion, then marking (seemingly randomly) some

notes/chords to eliminate from both passages so far (roughly one third of them) to generate a new line, then performing a retrograde inversion on all material so far (see Fig. 74 (b)) for the beginnings of each component of this passage). Each of the various versions of the material is marked by a tenuto at the beginning and end of the group, in the right hand. Finnissy derives further variants through similar processes and transpositions.

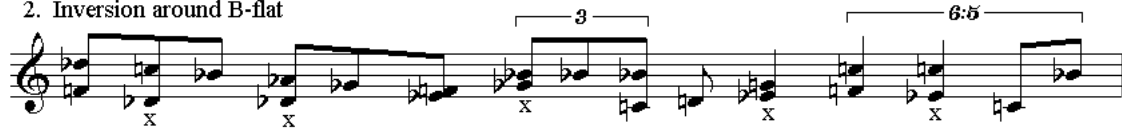


Fig. 74 (a). Derivations from Bach material.

1. From penultimate phrase of Bach BWV 328. Notes marked 'x' to be eliminated later



2. Inversion around B-flat



3. Elimination of 'x' notes - transposition up a semitone



4. Retrograde inversion around B



Fig. 74 (b). Bach based canon material used in *Etched Bright with Sunlight*

In order to prepare the ground for the Berlioz motive, Finnissy uses a final passage (A6) at an extremely quiet dynamic, mixing harmonically diffuse material with short inserts which suggest a clearer tonal centre. This time the material presented in such a manner is highly ornate and florid, involving undulating triplet semiquaver notes/chords in the bass and lines in the treble in groups of three quavers duration, mostly consisting of one quaver followed by four semiquavers, at least at the outset. These alternate with short inserts where the material in either hand is swapped, and the tonality focuses in on D-flat (the other material is tonally diffuse).

The 'Scène d'amour' theme emerges out of some meandering, distant, blurred music, in its fullest form since *Le démon*. Unlike then, when it was accompanied by Bach organ chorale prelude material, the accompaniment is here derived directly from the

Berlioz itself. Finnissy skilfully leads into this by continuing some of the figuration from the previous passage, though thinned out, and gradually configuring it until it is transformed into downward arpeggios. The melody begins with a fragmented form of the Berlioz made into a seamless line, before the theme proper (the 'Juliette' theme) appears. Finnissy at this point sticks to the viola part from the Berlioz (though not the second violin part, thus thinning the texture and harmonic richness), except for modifying it with the indicated rising chromatic scale, towards a 6/4 harmony on the subdominant of A major. Julian Rushton points out how Berlioz here 'restores the tonic A major but repeatedly postpones a secure cadence'.³⁷⁵ Likewise for Finnissy, until he shifts the hands, in which a bare fifth harmony comes closest to a root position triadic resolution (on the following system he briefly has the tonic root with the third included). But both of these function within the context of a distorted form of the Berlioz melody in the bass, so fall somewhat sort of a definitive closure. Then Finnissy places the latter part of the melody in retrograde inversion to the bass, followed by a return to the treble with increasing pitch distortion so as to place the passage out of focus, whilst enacting a rather awkward cadence into C-flat major. He then leads back from this into the 'Juliet' theme, which seeks to re-establish A major but is overruled by the chromatic bass that gradually veers towards a cadence onto D, the key centre for the next section.

Despite the intense mediation on Finnissy's part, not to mention the fact that this section remains at a very quiet dynamic, still this passage draws attention to itself in a way that bears upon the way the whole cycle is perceived. Nostalgia is a feature of this passage, undoubtedly, but tempered by a degree of critical sensibility. The Berlioz theme appears, but somewhere on the distant horizon, a reminder of what was rather than an implication that it is recoverable in the same form. A parallel can be found in the passages of Elizabethan poetry in the Jarman screenplay, acting as small islands of tenderness within the otherwise savage scenes.

Sections B and C are more straightforward, ranging through fragments of past material, with something of the tight montage to be found in *Unsere Afrikareise* in particular. For Section B, marked in the sketches as '*l'orientalisme*',³⁷⁶ Finnissy employs some of the most 'exotic' musical material, specifically combinations of very short cut-up fragments from the Moroccan/Berber music encountered in *Unsere Afrikareise*, alternated with three other passages alluding directly to the Kavafis section from the *Poets* (Cretan music), each marked *malinconico (quasi Flauto)*, centered around C, E-flat and E-flat again, respectively. The Moroccan/Berber material is centered mostly around D, and features prominent flattened second and fourth degrees of the scale, whilst the Kavafis material is altered in pitch each time, especially the third passage which is presented with flattened second and third degrees of the scale.

Further permutations from *Unsere Afrikareise* enable a transition to Section C, in which Finnissy can now bring in rapid changes of tempo, and incorporate allusions to the bleak Section F from *My parents' generation*, and other material, at one point featuring a further fragment derived from Berlioz, now more clearly tonally centered and at a

³⁷⁵ Julian Rushton, *Berlioz: Roméo et Juliette* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 40. Also, as Charles Rosen points out, Berlioz's harmonies contradict the implied harmony of the melody, to which Finnissy also adheres, even in the most 'straight' few bars at the centre of this excerpt. See Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, pp. 559-560.

³⁷⁶ Finnissy's original plan for this chapter was quite different structurally, involving multiple occurrences of the monophonic 'oriental' material, and the Berlioz quote appearing later. However, he changed his mind during the course of the composition.

medium dynamic. Eventually it proves possible to move seamlessly into a near exact recapitulation of the Symonds material from the end of the *Poets* which is used extensively here as a route towards the ultimate return of the 'Compression' (though a very indirect route, as we will see). The tonal relationship between the hands is maintained, both of them transposed up a minor third from the original, though the order of the sections is changed.

A detour en route to the final 'Compression' is provided via several sections from *Bachsche Nachdichtungen*, specifically the 'In Canone all'Ottava', then a combination of Billings' hymn 'Bedford' with the first phrase of the Bach chorale, using a configuration taken directly from the opening section Busoni's *Choral-Vorspiel und Fuge über ein Bachsches Fragment*. This sets into motion the build-up proper towards the work's climax, in which Finnissy employs further combinations of Billings with the *motivo fondamentale*, then *Canone al rovescio (i) alla Seconda*, and the *calmando e semplice* of the *alla Nona*. The use of continuous 3/4 rhythms generates a sense of onwardness towards the 'compression' material, though towards the climax Finnissy introduces 6:5 and 7:5 ratios to finally destabilise and fracture the beat.

Unlike in the *Poets*, Finnissy postpones the climax within the 'Compression' by at first lowering the dynamic to a (possibly unrealistic!) *pppppp!*. The effect of this passage is electric, providing as it does a counterpart to the wildest reaches of the opening, but here spread over the whole keyboard. The very calmness of the Bach section leading up to it has created a sense of imminence by its placing (coming after various somewhat more animated sections). The final Section F naturally attempts some type of summation of the cycle, using a randomly chosen selection from most of the pieces in rapid succession, like a flash-by of the cycle as a whole. Quite naturally, the final phrase comes from the Bach the Bach chorale BWV 328, specifically from the inner parts. The grace note E-flat (itself preceded by a D serving as a leading note) that precedes the climactic G in the left hand (this preceded by a B-flat-A-flat progression), combined with the B-flat in the treble, all preceded by various progressions and harmonies which imply a type of cadence, provide a strong sense of a triadic resolution towards E-flat major. But just as instantly the parts blur this harmony, the dynamic falls, and the piece disappears into thin air, the last harmony heard being a D-G perfect fourth which implies a sharp move away from E-flat. The ending in the treble register also suggests a belated resolution of the material in Section A, whilst the register itself aids the sense of the music 'disappearing', as if into the ether.

In comparison to the involved musical arguments to be found in, for example, *My parents' generation* or *Kapitalistisch Realisme*, *Etched Bright with Sunlight* is a relatively straightforward piece to listen to, a fiercely immediate and surface-dominated finale that I have elsewhere described as a 'devastating vortex of a piece that pulls in most of what has come before'. Yet there is an optimism about the conclusion. It is violent, certainly, but it also achieves a type of partial resolution; more importantly, it implies the music could go on longer, and there continues to be scope for creation and innovation.



ABSTRACTS

Maarten Beirens (University of Amsterdam), 'Questioning the foreign and the familiar: Interpreting Michael Finnissy's use of traditional and non-Western sources'.

From the 1980s onwards, Michael Finnissy has based entire works on or included references to a wide variety of traditional music, ranging from English, Scottish and Irish tunes, Australian Aboriginal material, Negro Spirituals, to various Central European, Asian and African sources.

As always, the presence of pre-existing material invites speculation on the signifying function of those appropriated materials, as well as the implications of the process of appropriation itself. Arguably, Finnissy treats such 'foreign' elements in idiosyncratic ways that do not simply align with well-established 20th-century modes of dealing with non-Western music, such as orientalism as defined by Edward Saïd or the fusion of non-Western elements such as in György Ligeti's later works. Taking as examples the vast catalogue of references throughout the *Folklore* cycle and the juxtaposition of Western 'classical' and African 'traditional' materials in *Unsere Afrikareise*, this paper will examine the implications of Finnissy's use of such musical sources that encompass both personal/subjective elements, as critical and political positions.

Larry Goves (Royal Northern College of Music), 'Michael Finnissy & Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: the composer as anthropologist'.

Starting with composer Michael Finnissy and anthropologist Tim Ingold's preoccupation with line, this paper contemplates features of the former's music through some of the latter's ideas and writings. More specifically, it considers the notion that exploring Finnissy's compositional approach as applied anthropology provides productive insights into his music and performance practice. The starting point for this investigation is a consideration of three of Finnissy's pieces connected to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Completion of the Requiem KV 626 by W.A. Mozart and F.X. Süssmayr* (2011); *Cibavit eos* (1991); and *WAM* (1990-1991). These pieces provide a convenient set of examples with relevant features: music that connects to the past; music with elaborate line(s); music written for amateur performers; transcription; and instrumentalists that move as part of the performance. These recurring features of Finnissy's composition could be considered indicative of this anthropological approach; they are informed by an investment in people that aspires to musical and personal transformation.

Roddy Hawkins (University of Manchester), 'Articulating, Dwelling, Travelling: Michael Finnissy and Marginality'.

Looking back at public pronouncements of the type composers make (and are frequently invited to give), one of the most striking and consistent features of Michael Finnissy's persona has been the explicit articulation of an outsider status, or marginality. The

question of marginality is surely a vexed one for composers of contemporary music based in comparatively rich countries, especially when thrown into relief against a broader geopolitical context: as Stefan Collini notes in his book *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*, ‘we are all inside some circles and outside others’. In musicology, Charles Wilson’s frequently cited conception of the ‘rhetoric of autonomy’ is one prominent example of a wider tendency, now over twenty years old, to engage critically with the self-positioning strategies used by composers and their advocates. But though related, autonomy and marginality are not synonymous.

In this talk, I offer a re-reading of Wilson’s concept and of related thinking in order to problematise what might be called the cartographic limitations underpinning accounts of twentieth-century music after the 1960s. This is not to diminish the importance of aesthetic discourse as a legitimising strategy; it is, rather, to ask how contemporary music and marginality might be conceived in ways which is neither hagiographic nor cynical. Simply at the level of verbal discourse, for example, the ways in which Finnissy’s marginality is articulated is far from straightforward, and this is to say nothing of composition or performance. Therefore, by drawing on Larry Goves’ recent application of Tim Ingold’s theory of Lines as a model for capturing the ‘wayfaring’ of Finnissy’s music, I consider the musical and social impulses which inform our understanding of Finnissy’s ‘place’ at the turn of the 1980s, a period where the issue of marginality is brought into sharp focus.

Ian Pace (City, University of London), ‘Michael Finnissy between Jean-Luc Godard and Dennis Potter: appropriation of techniques from cinema and TV’

That Michael Finnissy’s music draws extensively upon ideas and techniques from cinema and other forms of moving images has long been recognised, though this has rarely been explored in detail. From a young age he would devour silent films by the likes of G.W. Pabst, Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac, and Jean Renoir, and also the work of the New York Underground in the 1960s – Stan Brakhage, Gregory Markopoulos, Harry Smith, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, Robert Breer, Stan Vanderbeek. He himself cites as his primary cinematic influences Brakhage, Markopoulos, Jack Smith, Warhol, Jean-Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini.

In this paper I consider briefly a series of works, from the *Songs* for various instruments up to *The History of Photography in Sound*, in relationship to cinematic techniques and strategies of some of these directors, and also from the television playwright Dennis Potter. Drawing upon some of the approaches of film theorists, including David Bordwell in his *Narration in the Fiction Film*, I consider some of the forms of montage and other relationships between strands of musical material to be found in Finnissy’s music, and compare these to some of the ideas of Soviet theorists and also to the strategies employed in several Godard films, as well as in some of Potter’s screenplays and Kubelka’s *Unsere Afrikareise*. I also compare the types of perspectives and juxtapositions of extremes of material in Brakhage’s *Songs* to Finnissy’s works of the same name, and the use of found materials (musical or otherwise) in Godard’s work (especially his *Histoire(s) du cinema*) and that of Potter. I conclude by offering some suggestions for new approaches to analysis of Finnissy’s work on this basis, and which might inform more widely the underresearched area of the influence of cinema upon music.

Lauren Redhead (Canterbury Christ Church University), 'The Medium is Now the Material: The "Folklore" of Chris Newman and Michael Finnissy'.

Chris Newman and Michael Finnissy are both composers of long duration piano works. Both composers also frequently make use of borrowed material—from 'folk' sources, and from the musical cannon. In this paper, their approaches to composition with these materials are compared and contrasted, in order to examine whether the numerous, surface-level, binary oppositions that might be posited between their musics hide similarities in their approach to musical material. This is seen through the lens of a reversed subject-object distinction, proposed by Newman in 2005. The materials of the extended duration piano works *Folklore* (Finnissy, 1993-4) and *The Reason Why I am Unable to Live as a Composer in my Country is a Political One* (Newman, 1983-84) are considered, alongside the composers' approach to material and to medium.

Gregory Woods (Nottingham Trent University), 'My "personal themes"?!': Finnissy's Seventeen Homosexual Poets and the Material World'.

In the sixth section of *The History of Photography in Sound*, the composer-who-is-gay has the temerity to highlight the word-that-is-homosexual. This is not the harping on a 'personal theme', as has been claimed, but an engagement with social history, aesthetic tradition and a continuity of political development. Nor is it a 'minority' or side issue. As one of the seventeen poets, Woods will present the other sixteen as exemplifying significant shifts in modern culture.





BIOGRAPHIES

Patrícia Sucena de Almeida studied Electroacoustic Music and Composition with the Portuguese composer João Pedro Oliveira at the University of Aveiro (Portugal) and in 1997 she finished her degree in Music Teaching. In 1998 she graduated with a master's degree in Composition from Edinburgh's University, as a scholarship student of "Fundação Para a Ciência e a Tecnologia do Ministério da Educação - Portugal, no âmbito do 2º Quadro Comunitário de Apoio". That same year she started a doctorate program (still as a scholarship student) in Composition at City University of London and in 2000 she continued her composition studies at Southampton University with the British composer Michael Finnissy, finishing her PhD in 2004. Between 2007 and 2013 she worked on a project (Post-Doctorate) dealing with music and various media creating a new concept, characterizing works which 'mix' various arts – Transversal Multi Art.

Her portfolio includes: *Solitude* (1999) (performed at "The International Gaudeamus Music Week 2001", Amsterdam); *Argumentum* (2001) (performed at "Porto 2001 - Capital Europeia da Cultura"); *Transfiguratio* (2002) (worked out during the workshop of "Cours du Centre Acanthes 2002", Villeneuve-les-Avignon); *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* (2003/2005) (orchestral version performed at the III Gulbenkian's workshop for Portuguese Young Composers, Lisbon, 2004); *Monstrum Horrendum* (2003/2004) (orchestral version performed at the II Gulbenkian's workshop for Portuguese Young Composers, Lisbon, 2003); *Fatum Hominis* (2005) (selected for the "ISCM world Music Days/23rd Music Biennale Zagreb 2005", and performed at "Ny Musikk 2005", Oslo); *Silens Clamor* (2004) (commissioned by the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et Danse de Lyon for the "Académie de Chambre Contemporaine Jeunesse Moderne 2004", performed at "Musica 2007", Strasbourg, and at "Futuros 1.2", Lisbon, 2008); *Dulce Delirium* (2005) (performed by the Arditti Quartet at the "Centre Acanthes 2005", Metz, at the "Atlantic Waves 2006", London, at the "Festival Internacional de Aveiro and Lisbon, 2007); *Fati Necessitas* (2005) (commissioned and performed by the Contemporary Music Ensemble of Lisbon, Matosinhos, 2006, and at the "IX Semana Cultural da Universidade de Coimbra, 2007); *Aranea* (2006) (commissioned and performed at the "Festival Música Viva 2006", Lisbon, and at the "XXVI Festival de Música de Leiria", 2008); *Nocturna Itinera* (2008) (performed at the "44th International Summer Courses for New Music", Darmstadt, 2008, and at the "2nd Blonay Workshop for Contemporary Quartet Music 2008"); *In Occulto* (2009) (performed at "Ciclos de Concertos Momentum", Aveiro, 2009, at the "New Music Festival (Transit 2009)", Leuven, 2009 and at the "Concert Series", City University, London, 2010); *Sublime Volans* (2010) (performed at the "25º aniversário da Miso Music Portugal", Instituto Franco-Português, Lisbon, 2010, at the "Fórum Internacional Jovens Compositores", Goethe-Institut, Lisbon, 2011, at the Korea Foundation – Cultural Center Gallery, 2011, and at "Guimarães Capital Europeia da Cultura 2012"); *Reditus ad vitam* (2012) (performed at "Do Virtuosismo pianístico de Liszt à multi(n)disciplina do século XXI", Coimbra, 2013) and version II (2013) (performed at Flame Festival, Florence, 2013).

She has participated at the "IRCAM's Académies d'été, the "40th Internationalen Ferienkursen für Neue Musik – 2000 and 2007" in Darmstadt; the "Cours du Centre Acanthes 2002 and 2003 at the Chartreuse de Villeneuve-les-Avignon and 2004 and 2005 in Metz; the I, II, III and IV Gulbenkian's Workshop for Portuguese Young Composers

and a number of other seminars and workshops with composers such as Emmanuel Nunes, Jonathan Harvey, Luca Francesconi, Hilda Paredes, Gérard Grisey, Brian Ferneyhough, Pascal Dusapin, Luc Brewaeys; experimental workshops and concerts with Arditti Quartet, the pianist Ian Pace, Yutaka Oya and Filip Fak, Orquestra Gulbenkian, Grupo de Música Contemporânea de Lisboa, Orchestre lyrique de Région Avignon – Provence, L'Ensemble Itinéraire, Sond'Ar-te Electric Ensemble, Remix Ensemble, Orchestre Utopica, Ensemble Studio New Music; and conductors like Sylvio Gualda, Sarah Ioannides, Igor Dronov, Christopher Bochmann, Guillaume Bourgogne, Pedro Neves, Pedro Amaral.

Website: <http://patriciasucenadealmeida.net/>

E-mail: patricia@aeminium.org

Born in Essex in 1996, **Alexander Benham** didn't take up the piano until the age of 11. With classical tuition and concert opportunities from teachers, Graduates of the Guildhall School of Music, Alex was inspired to study music in London. Now studying Music at City University of London, Alex is a classical pianist with a focus on performing rarely heard 20th century works and an aspiring instrumental composer. He is currently applying for Postgraduate courses in London and abroad specialising in Performance or Composition.

E-mail: xbenhampiano@live.com

Maarten Beirens is a lecturer in musicology at the University of Amsterdam. He studied musicology at the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium, where he also received his Ph. D. with a thesis on European minimal music. He held a postdoctoral fellowship of the FWO Flanders at the KU Leuven, conducting research on the music of Steve Reich. His publications include articles and chapters on European minimalism, the music of Michael Finnissy, Karel Goeyvaerts, Louis Andriessen, Michael Nyman, Steve Reich, and analytical strategies for minimal music. In addition to his academic work, he worked as a music critic for the leading Flemish newspaper De Standaard and several other media from 1997-2014. From 2014 onwards he is the general director of Festival 20/21 in Leuven, which includes the artistic direction of the *Transit* festival.

E-mail: maarten@festival2021.be

Christopher Fox is a composer who sometimes writes about music too. Often working at a tangent to the musical mainstream he has based his compositional career around close collaborations with particular performers, including Roger Heaton, Ian Pace, Anton Lukoszevieve, the instrumental groups the Ives Ensemble, KNM Berlin and Apartment House, and the vocal ensembles The Clerks and EXAUDI. His work is the subject of the book *Perspectives on the music of Christopher Fox: Straight lines in broken times* (Ashgate-Routledge, 2016). CDs of his music are available on the Ergodos, HatHut, Metier and NMC labels. He is editor of *TEMPO* and professor of music at Brunel University London.

E-mail: Christopher.Fox@brunel.ac.uk

Larry Goves is a composer based in Manchester. His music has been performed and broadcast around the world and released on NMC, Dutton, Prima Facie, Slip, nonclassical, Prah and on The London Sinfonietta's Label. He directs ensemble The House of Bedlam and curates the Decontamination concert series at the Royal Northern College of Music. He is a Paul Hamlyn Award for Composers recipient and has been shortlisted for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award. He is a lecturer at the RNCM and a composition tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He studied with Anthony Gilbert and Michael Finnissy.

E-mail: Larry.Goves@rncm.ac.uk

Roddy Hawkins has since 2014 been Lecturer in Music at the University of Manchester, where he is co-director of the Sonic Cultures Research Group. Before that he worked at both Manchester and the University of Leeds as a Teaching Fellow. Since beginning his doctorate ten years ago his research has focused around the production and consumption of avant-garde music in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s, with a focus on the historiography of complex music notation and the emergence of the grouping and name New Complexity. Three articles and a monograph are currently in progress. In November last year, together with Philip Thomas, he convened the symposium 'Michael Finnissy: Dialogues', which explored Finnissy's connection to others not least in his role as performer. A related, broader topic to have emerged from this research has been the contemporary music ensemble, and a research network dedicated to this topic is in the pipeline. With another hat on, Hawkins has written on representations of popular music, masculinity and automobility, which shares in common with the research on contemporary music an overarching methodological approach rooted in hermeneutics.

E-mail: rodody.hawkins@manchester.ac.uk

As a soloist and chamber musician **Neil Heyde** has appeared throughout Europe, and in the USA and Australia, broadcasting for the BBC, WDR, ORF, Radio France, RAI, NRK, DR, Netherlands Radio and many other networks. Since the mid 90s he has been the cellist of the Kreutzer Quartet and he now heads the postgraduate programmes at the Royal Academy of Music, where his work focuses on relationships between performers and composers – past and present. He has just returned from the Abbaye Royaumont where he ran a three-day practice and research workshop on his edition of Debussy's *Sonate pour Flûte, Alto et Harpe* for the Oeuvres Complètes. His discography extends to more than 30 recordings, mostly with the quartet, but also film and solo work, and he has commissioned and premiered many solo and chamber pieces. A DVD film and documentary exploring his work on Brian Ferneyhough's extraordinary *Time and Motion Study II* for solo cello and electronics made by Colin Still is available on iTunesU and film of his work on Michael Finnissy's *Chi Mei Ricercari* (2013) on seven cellos from the Academy's collection is available on the research pages of the Academy's website alongside lecture text.

E-mail: N.HEYDE@ram.ac.uk

Ian Pace is an internationally-renowned pianist and musicologist. He has performed in over 25 countries in Europe, North America and Asia, given around 200 world premieres, and recorded over 30 CDs. He has a long-standing relationship with the music of Michael Finnissy, having given a landmark six-concert series in 1996 of the complete piano works, to celebrate the composer's 50th birthday; a feat he repeated in eleven concerts in 2016-17 for the composer's 70th birthday, by which time his output for piano was well over twice the size of twenty years earlier. Ian also gave the world premiere of Finnissy's five-and-a-half hour cycle *The History of Photography in Sound* at the Royal Academy of Music in January 2001, and has since performed it complete in the UK, Belgium and Canada (this conference features his seventh complete performance) as well as many performances of individual chapter. His recording of the work and accompanying monograph *Michael Finnissy's The History of Photography in Sound: A Study of Sources, Techniques and Interpretation* were released by Divine Art in 2013, and have received rave reviews. He has also premiered works by composers including Patrícia Sucena de Almeida, Julian Anderson, Richard Barrett, Konrad Boehmer, Luc Brewaeys, Aaron Cassidy, James Clarke, James Dillon, Pascal Dusapin, Richard Emsley, James Erber, Brian Ferneyhough, Christopher Fox, Wieland Hoban, Volker Heyn, Evan Johnson, Maxim Kolomiets, André Laporte, Hilda Paredes, Alwynne Pritchard, Horatiu Radulescu, Lauren Redhead, Frederic Rzewski, Thoma Simaku, Howard Skempton, Gerhard Stäbler, Serge Verstockt, Hermann Vogt, Alistair Zaldia and Walter Zimmermann, and given cycles of the piano music of Ferneyhough, Fox, Kagel, Ligeti, Lachenmann, Messiaen, Radulescu, Rihm, Rzewski, Skempton and Stockhausen. Forthcoming recordings will include the complete piano works of Brian Ferneyhough (for release in 2017), the Piano Sonatas of Pierre Boulez, John Cage's *The Music of Changes*, and piano works of Marc Yeats.

He is Lecturer in Music and Head of Performance at City, University of London. Areas of academic interest and expertise include 19th century performance practice (especially relating to the music of Liszt and Brahms), issues of music and society, in the tradition Adorno and the Frankfurt School, contemporary performance practice, practice-as-research, music and culture under fascism, the post-1945 avant-garde, in particular in West Germany, and issues of critical musicology. He co-edited and was a major contributor the volume *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy*, which was published by Ashgate in 1998, and has also published many articles in *Music and Letters*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *TEMPO*, *The Musical Times*, *The Liszt Society Journal*, *International Piano*, *Musiktexte*, *Musik & Ästhetik*, *The Open Space Magazine*, as well as various book chapters.

He is also active as a campaigner and researcher on issues of abuse in musical education, and has made many media appearances to speak on the subject, as well as advised politicians and government inquiries.

Website: <http://www.ianpace.com> ; Blog: <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/> .

E-mail: ian@ianpace.com ; ian.pace.1@city.ac.uk

Jonathan Powell is a pianist and composer. He studied the piano with Denis Matthews and Sulamita Aronovsky. After concentrating on composition during the 1990s, he then established an international career as a soloist. He has a particular interest in contemporary music and composers of the early 20th century: in particular the music of Scriabin and other Russian modernists, as well as Ives, Szymanowski, Busoni, Enescu and others. Over the last decade, concerts have taken him on a tour across the US, to the Musica Sacra Festival in Maastricht, the contemporary series hosted by the Fundación BBVA in Bilbao, the Musica Nova Festival in Helsinki, the Festival Radio France Montpellier, Borealis Festival in Bergen, the Huddersfield Festival of Contemporary Music, recital broadcasts for Radio Netherlands and Radio Deutschland Kultur, the Raritäten der Klaviermusik am Schloss vor Husum, Vredenburg Muziekcentrum in Utrecht, De Toonzaal in 'S Hertogenbosch, and in the Jewish Museum and Altes Rathaus, Vienna. His recent concerto appearances include Brahms' 2nd (with the Slovak Philharmonic), Liszt's *Malédiction* (with the Kiev Soloists), Finnissy's 2nd Concerto (at the Moscow Conservatoire) and Sørensen's 2nd (with the Prague Philharmonia under Marian Lejava). During 2013 and 2014 he made international tours featuring Messiaen's *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus* and Albeniz' *Iberia* respectively. During 2015 he gave numerous performances of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata and Reger's *Bach Variations*. Current activities include a tour featuring the complete piano works of Xenakis (including one at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw) and, in 2017, several performances of Sorabji's *Opus clavicembalisticum* and a trip to China.

Masterclasses, lecture-recitals and coaching have taken Powell to the Janáček Academy (Brno), Oxford University, the Guildhall School and Music and Drama (London), Cornish College of Arts (Seattle), and Det Jyske Musikkonservatorium (Esbjerg and Odense, Denmark), among others. As a chamber musician, he has worked with 'cellist Rohan de Saram, violinist Ashot Sarkisjan, flautist Matteo Cesari, and sopranos Svetlana Sozdateleva, Irena Troupova and Sarah Leonard. Powell has worked with several of today's prominent composers, in particular Claudio Ambrosini, and Michael Finnissy. He is currently awaiting a new solo work from Arturas Bumšteinas. Powell is a self-taught composer – he has recorded several of his own works for BBC broadcasts and has received performances by the London Sinfonietta, the Arditti Quartet, Valdine Anderson, and Nicolas Hodges among others. His articles on many aspects of Russian music appear in the New Grove Dictionary of Music. He lives in southern Poland.

E-mail: jonathanpowell@mutablelogic.com

Christopher Redgate is currently the Evelyn Barbirolli Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music and has recently been elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. He is the inventor of the Howarth-Redgate system oboe, an instrument designed specifically for the performance of contemporary music. For the last forty years he has specialised in the performance of contemporary music and has developed significantly several aspects of oboe technique. He has performed in most European countries, Scandinavia, Australia, America, Canada, Mexico and China and worked with many chamber ensembles and orchestras. An extensive list of composers have written works for him including Michael Finnissy, Brian Ferneyhough, Richard Barrett, Sam Hayden, Paul Archbold, Roger Redgate and Edwin Roxburgh.

In addition to his performing activities he lectures extensively, takes many masterclasses, composition classes and research seminars and writes on oboe related subjects (a new book: *21st Century Oboe* is in progress at the moment). He is also an active composer.

His recordings, many of which have received substantial critical acclaim, can be found on the *Oboe Classics* label, *Metier/Divine Art label* and *NMC*.

Website: www.21stcenturyoboe.com

E-mail: christopherredgate@me.com

Roger Redgate graduated at the Royal College of Music, where he won prizes for composition, violin performance, harmony and counterpoint, studying composition with Edwin Roxburgh and electronic music with Lawrence Casserley. A DAAD scholarship enabled him to study with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber in Freiburg. From 1989 to 1992 he was Northern Arts Composer Fellow, and has lectured at Durham and Newcastle Universities. He was invited as guest composer and conductor at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik from 1984-1994 where he received the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis for composition. He is conductor and artistic director of Ensemble Exposé, with whom he has performed at many European festivals and on BBC Radio 3 and recently released a CD of music by Brian Ferneyhough. He has worked in the fields of jazz, improvised music, film and television (including programmes for the BBC and Channel 4), and performance art. His compositions have been performed extensively throughout Europe, Australia and the USA and he has received commissions from the BBC, the French Ministry of Culture, the Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, the Venice Biennale and Ensemble 21 New York. He has published articles on new music and culture, the music of Brian Ferneyhough and Michael Finnissy, including a chapter in the book *Uncommon Ground: The Music of Michael Finnissy*. His works are published Editions Henri Lemoine, Paris and United Music Publishers. He is professor of composition at Goldsmiths, University of London where he is director of the Contemporary Music Research Unit.

E-mail: R.Redgate@gold.ac.uk

Lauren Redhead is a composer of experimental music, a performer of music for organ and electronics and a musicologist whose interest lie in the aesthetics and socio-semiotics of late twentieth and twenty first century music. In particular, she is interested in interdisciplinary and collaborative practices, notation, materialism, minority discourse and psychoanalytic perspectives on music. Lauren is Senior Lecturer in Music at Canterbury Christ Church University.

E-mail: lauren.redhead@canterbury.ac.uk

Nancy Ruffer was born in Detroit and received a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan. She was awarded a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship to study at The Royal Academy of Music, London and has remained in London working as a free-lance

flautist specialising in contemporary music. She won the Kranichsteiner Prize for Performance at Darmstadt and was awarded an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. She has been principal flute in the ensembles Matrix, Music Projects/London, Apartment House and The Almeida Ensemble, performed in the orchestras at The Royal National Theatre for productions including 'Oklahoma!' and 'His Dark Materials' and has worked with The London Sinfonietta, Endymion, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and orchestras including The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She teaches flute at King's College School, Cambridge and at City, University of London.

CDs include 'Trios for Flute, Oboe and Piano' on the Dutton Epoch label, with John Anderson, oboe and Helen Crayford, piano; 'Eddie McGuire' for flute, guitar (Abigail James) and piano (Dominic Saunders) on Delphian; 'British Fantasies, American Dreams', consisting of 20th century music for flute and piano (recorded with pianist Helen Crayford) on the Guild label, 'Pipe Dreams', a CD of trios for two flutes (with Anna Pope) and piano (Helen Crayford) on Guild, and a solo CD of contemporary flute works entitled 'Multiplicities' on the Metier label.

Website: <http://trittico.co.uk>

E-mail: birmingham1869@googlemail.com

Ben Smith is a London-based composer and performer specialising in contemporary music. He is interested in – amongst other things – phenomenological and semiotic approaches to musical analysis, and compositional encounters with silence and repetition. Ben graduated from City University in 2015, and currently studies at Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Rolf Hind and James Weeks.

E-mail: bensmithkeys@mac.com

Gregory Woods is the author of five poetry collections from Carcanet Press: *We Have the Melon* (1992), *May I Say Nothing* (1998), *The District Commissioner's Dreams* (2002), *Quidnunc* (2007) and *An Ordinary Dog* (2011). His non-fiction includes *Articulate Flesh: Male Homo-eroticism and Modern Poetry* (1987), *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (1998) and *Homintern: How Gay Culture Liberated the Modern World* (2016), all published by Yale University Press. He is emeritus professor of gay and lesbian studies at Nottingham Trent University.

Website: www.gregorywoods.co.uk

E-mail: gregory.woods@ntu.ac.uk

